

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF ESTRANGEMENT
IN HEGEL'S EARLY WRITINGS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the field of
religion under the Subcommittee on
Religion of the Joint Committee on
Graduate Instruction, Columbia Uni-
versity.

Cornelius Loew

New York

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INTRODUCTION

For generations the name Hegel has been linked with the word system. In present-day philosophical and theological discussion, which is flavored with the spice of Kierkegaard's attack on "the system" as a dangerous and delusive attempt to escape existential commitment, it is taken for granted that Hegel's thought must have been empty and arid theoretical speculation which is irrelevant to our newly-awakened concern about the tragic fragmentariness of human existence. The following study has been undertaken in the conviction that Hegel has been dismissed too easily. Its purpose will be to lend support to the suggestion that however severe and however legitimate the criticisms of Hegel have been, yet his vision of the human situation--expressed in his use of the idea of estrangement--underlies much of the creative philosophical and theological work which has been done since his time.

Undoubtedly one of the reasons why Hegel's system customarily is written off as irrelevant can be traced to the fact that not until 1907, more than half a century after the Hegelian synthesis broke down--or apart--were his early theological writings first collected and published.¹ These fragments are crucial for understanding the whole of Hegel's thought because they present

¹Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften, ed. Herman Nohl (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907). Most of the materials included in this collection were translated into English and published for the first time in 1948 under the title, Hegel's Early Theological Writings, translated by T. M. Knox, with an introduction by Richard Kroner (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).

to open view the central concerns which dominated his search for a full and harmonious interpretation of reality, concerns which later were symbolized by abstract terms which masked their continued presence and vitality. We shall restrict our attention to those of Hegel's writings which preceded the main surge of his system-building, specifically, to the theological fragments mentioned above, in which the primary stages of the development of the concept of estrangement can be traced, and to The Phenomenology of Mind, in which the meaning of estrangement becomes fixed and its role in the system assured. Some attention also will be given to the transitional period between the theological and the philosophical works.

CHAPTER ONE

The theme of estrangement and reconciliation runs through all of the early theological writings. What is more significant is that the two longest and most complete essays deal directly with the concept and carry it through a series of stages in which its meaning gains precision and its applicability to perennial human problems becomes more and more apparent. The first two chapters of our study, therefore, will be a description and an analysis of "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" and "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate."

The human story Hegel tells in "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" is very familiar. It is a story of paradise and the fall. Essential human nature gains historical realization in the Greeks, it is "lost" after they succumb to Roman conquest, and subsequent history must be viewed as the continuation of man's estrangement from his true nature and the frustration of sporadic attempts to overcome his predicament.

Paradise and the fall are interdependent. The criterion by which the fall is defined and judged is the perfection of paradise before the fall. For Hegel the perfection of Greek life lies in the over-all unity of life achieved in the form of the nation (Volk). The nation is a political idea in so far as it corresponds to our notion of a nation as a geographical and political entity. It is a cultural idea in that it includes common history, tradition, language, art, etc. And it is a religious idea because national unity is the focus of supreme loyalty, of ultimate meaning, and of complete fulfillment of life. The

nation functions like an organism. Its various elements maintain their identity and yet they cooperate harmoniously as members of a single body. Hegel writes:

The spirit, the history, and the religion of a people, whatever the degree of political freedom these possess, allow themselves neither to coalesce nor to be sundered in their functioning. They are united like three colleagues, so united that no one of them can act alone but each limits the others.¹

What is true of these aspects of national life is true also of the most important relationship to be found within the nation as a functioning body, the relationship between the individual citizen and the nation as a whole. The distinctive mark of life in Greek society was that each person was free and independent, on the one hand, while on the other hand, each person exercised his freedom only to create and enhance and maintain the unity of the nation. Hegel emphasizes the side of social identification to the point of the complete immersion of the individual in the group. He seems to imply that the Greek citizen gave up his individuality readily and unselfishly for the sake of the nation.

It was only this idea's maintenance, life, and persistence that he asked for. . . . Only in moments of inactivity or lethargy could he feel the growing strength of a purely self-regarding wish.²

It is difficult to see how such a surrender of individuality is compatible with individual freedom. Yet Hegel makes the paradoxical claim that the Greek citizen lost himself in the nation only to find himself as an autonomous person. He gave his entire being

¹This passage is from a fragment included in Nohl's collection under the title, "National Religion and Christianity," op.cit., p. 27.

²Hegel, Early Theological Writings, trans. Knox, op.cit., p. 154. (Hereafter referred to as ETW).

to society and in this very giving he received it back again authenticated and fulfilled.³ He could say of his nation what the Christian says of God: "in whose service is perfect freedom." He experienced no contradiction between freedom and unity. From the standpoint of the nation his life was unity in freedom. From the standpoint of himself as an individual his life was freedom in unity.

Hegel's blending of the individual and the social is paralleled by the blending of the sacred and the secular, of the meaning of life and the facts of life. For the Greek national unity was both ideal and real. As ideal it was worthy of ultimate devotion; as real it was open to active participation. The nation

was the final end of his world or in his eyes the final end of the world, an end which he found manifested in the realities of his daily life or which he himself cooperated in manifesting and maintaining.⁴

Theologically speaking, the nation as ideal was the Kingdom of God, while the nation as real was the Church, and the secret

³Rousseau's "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality" also gives a double picture of man's life in "paradise"--which for Rousseau was not life in a nation but rather life in the state of nature. One picture is that of an isolated man, roaming the woods and entering into only the most transient relations with his fellows, bound to none of them save as his natural needs and natural sympathy occasion. The other picture is social. Rousseau sketches that "first expansion of the human heart...which united husbands and wives, fathers and children, under one roof" and "soon gave rise to the finest feelings known to humanity, conjugal love and paternal affection," in a society which was "the more united because liberty and reciprocal attachment were the only bonds of its unity." Quotations are from "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality," pp. 184-185; the substance of the note is from Paul Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 315

⁴Hegel, op. cit., p. 154

of Greek perfection was that these two were not two but actually one. Hegel believed that in Greek times heaven was on earth, where it belongs, and that therefore every aspect of life was expressive of ultimate significance.

It follows that religion was not a separate sphere, but rather a quality of life which pervaded all spheres. Hegel emphasizes two general areas of human activity in which this quality is evident, morals and culture, and he describes religion as the emotional matrix out of which flows the power which energizes creativity in these realms. In the field of morals the focus is on the individual. Hegel writes of the Greek citizen:

His will was free and obeyed its own laws; he knew no divine commands, or, if he called the moral law a divine command, the command was nowhere given in words but ruled him invisibly. This implied that he recognized everyone's right to have a will of his own, be it good or bad. Good men acknowledged in their own case the duty of being good, yet at the same time they respected other people's freedom not to be so; thus they did not set up and impose on others any moral system, whether one that was divine or one manufactured or abstracted (from experience) by themselves.⁵

The basic presupposition of this picture of rational autonomy is that each person participates directly in eternal and self-subsistent reason. Reason is the structure of his freedom. If a man truly exercises his freedom he acts rationally, and if he acts rationally his actions will dovetail with the actions of his free and rational neighbors to produce social harmony. One type of religion, which Hegel calls private religion, is rooted in man's experience of the eternal and self-subsistent within himself, in the ineluctable feeling which convinces him that ultimacy, finality, and unity inhere in the reason which is the core of his being.

⁵Ibid., p. 155

Private religion authenticates emotionally what reason legislates morally. It must be called the emotional element in ethical motivation.⁶ The point Hegel emphasizes again and again is that there is no conflict between religion (so conceived) and the free and rigorous use of intelligence. Religion is a quality of all moral deliberation, not a substitute for it.

In the field of culture the focus is on the unity of national life, on the expression of the joy of that life in poetry, song, myth, drama, festival, etc. The type of religion Hegel calls public religion is rooted in a deep experience of the nation as the overarching (or undergirding) reality which gives all the multitudinous facets of life coherent meaning. This emotional appreciation generates cultural creativity. The free play of imagination expresses itself in all the various cultural forms which celebrate the exuberant joy of life of a free and united people.⁷ Thus public religion operates as the emotional stimulus

⁶In the fragments entitled "National Religion and Christianity" Hegel gives the following description of private religion: "It belongs to the idea of private religion that it is not merely a scientific study of God, of his attributes, of our relationship to him and the world's relationship to him, of the immortality of the soul--which matters becomes known to us anyway, either through pure reason or through some other channel. Nor is religion merely historical or rational knowledge. It belongs to the idea of religion that it interests the heart, that it possesses an influence over our feelings and over the disposition of our wills, partly in that our duties and the law receive a powerful authentication through it, in that they are presented to us as God's law, and partly in that the conception of God's sublimity and his goodness toward us fill our hearts with wonder and with feelings of humility and thankfulness" op. cit., p. 4

⁷When one speaks about public religion one understands thereby the ideas of God and immortality and what is related to them, so far as these agree with the convictions of a people, so far as they have influence on its actions and mode of thinking. Further, to public religion belong the means through which these ideas are communicated to a people, partly taught to them and partly made impressive to their hearts. Under this effectiveness

behind the production of powerful symbols. These symbols feed the spirit of the nation by giving the people a sense of the dignity and proud destiny of the "whole" to which they belong. They gain their power from the fact that they are indigenous and grow directly out of the daily life of the people.⁸ The completeness with which the Greeks experienced the integration of all elements of their national existence and expressed it in their way of life is reflected in this observation of Hegel's:

Anyone who did not know the history of the city, the culture, and the laws of Athens could almost have learned them from the festivals if he had lived a year within its gates.⁹

One very important side of national life has not yet been mentioned. No picture of a nation whose people exercise real freedom can be complete without a sketch of the political framework

is to be understood not merely the immediate understanding that I should not steal because God forbids it, but especially the more distant effects, which often are the most difficult to assess. These are principally the promotion and refinement of the spirit of a nation so that the so often dormant feeling of its dignity is awakened in its soul, so that the nation does not throw away the consciousness of itself, do not allow it to be discarded, so that it feels itself not only as 'so-and-so-many-people' but rather that the softest tints of humanity and intrinsic worth are brought into the picture." Ibid., p. 5

⁸Emotionally, public religion seems analogous to the deeper levels of what we mean by the word patriotism. Think of the power of "The American Dream," with the pendant symbols of the Constitution, Valley Forge, Washington and Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address, the flag, etc. These unify the nation emotionally and imaginatively, and they provide a seemingly inexhaustible impetus to free cultural expression. When one remembers that during the last war Christian congregations participated more spontaneously and more vigorously in the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which was sung during Sunday morning services, than they did in any portion of the religious liturgy or any of the hymns, one cannot help appreciating the power of what Hegel calls public religion.

⁹ETW, p. 147

within which this freedom operates. Hegel believes that the degree of political freedom a nation possesses will profoundly influence the spirit and tradition and religion of its citizens.¹⁰ He credits the Greeks with having developed truly democratic institutions in which the rational criterion of equality was given controlling power. He also draws out the socio-economic corollary and describes the class structure as fluid, with no rigid divisions and no oppression of the poor by the rich or of the weak by the strong.

To summarize: Hegel's ideal is social. The relationship between the individual and society is defined in crypto-dialectical fashion as unity-in-freedom and freedom-in-unity. The operation of this relationship in the actual life of the nation is described in terms of political democracy and of religious immanentism expressed culturally, both of these seen in analogy to organic processes.

Obviously, it is easy to question the literal accuracy of this picture of Greek "perfection." In the first place, modern research has made it impossible for us to see Greek culture as a unity to the extent to which Hegel did. In the second place, as Gray points out in his study of Hegel's Hellenic ideal,¹¹ Hegel looked exclusively at Athens, specifically at the Athens of the fifth century, in drawing his picture of the Hellenic

¹⁰"To shape the spirit of a people is partly the function of public religion and partly it is a matter of political relationships." Nohl, op. cit., p. 27.

¹¹J. Glenn Gray, Hegel's Hellenic Ideal (New York: King's Crown Press, 1941), pp. 54-55.

social consciousness. Further, his picture of the social ethos was chiefly taken from an equally limited field, the tragic dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Commentators often have pointed out that material drawn from such sources contains much romantic idealization. But if this type of criticism is taken to mean that his ideal should be dismissed as valueless, the significance of his vision has not been appreciated.¹² In fact, it can be argued that the significance of his vision cannot be understood as long as questions of historical accuracy are taken seriously. It is a theological commonplace that descriptions of man's life "before the fall" are an imaginative reversal of those aspects of contemporary life which are considered imperfect or sinful. Any particular thinker's sketch tells more about him than it does about Adam, and more about his own age than about paradise. Thus Hegel's ideal Greek society defines the problem Hegel believes to be central for modern culture--the loss of freedom and unity--and it also identifies the areas in which "slavery" and disunity should be recognized. This will become amply clear as we turn now to a consideration of Hegel's description of "the fall" and its consequences.

Ultimately the fall is a mystery. For Hegel the mystery of the disintegration of Greek life is enshrined in the historical victory of Christianity over paganism. How could a religion have been supplanted after it had been established in a state for

¹²As soon as the work of the historian is seen to be more than the collecting of facts, Hegel's amazing ability to work his way into the outlook and experience of ancient cultures must be acknowledged.

centuries and intimately connected with its constitution? How could the faith in the gods have been torn from the web of human life with which it had been interwoven by a thousand threads? The counterweight must have been immensely powerful in order to overcome the force of psychical habits which were not isolated, as our religion frequently is today, but was intertwined in every direction with men's capacities and intimately related to men's activities.

Hegel connects the fall of pagan religion-culture with the rise of despotism in Greek (and Roman) polity.

Greek and Roman religion was a religion for free peoples only, and, with the loss of freedom, its significance and strength, its fitness to men's needs, were also bound to perish.¹³

He analyzes the steps by which freedom was lost in a way which prefigures Marx. Fortunate campaigns, increase of wealth, and acquaintance with luxury and more and more of life's comforts created in Athens and Rome an aristocracy of wealth and military glory. This was a threat to democratic equality and freedom, for it widened and hardened class distinctions. At first the true republican spirit maintained itself. Citizens continued to prove their devotion to liberty by dismissing aristocratic rulers if they became displeased with them. But gradually the power of the ruling classes was upheld by force. Freedom vanished. Class was set against class, rich against poor, powerful against weak, rulers against the ruled. The ideal of national unity had been betrayed and therefore freedom had been lost.

This analysis is accurate as far as it goes, but Hegel

¹³ETW, p. 154.

is convinced that it does not go far enough. He believes that at a deeper level it is freedom which was betrayed and that therefore national unity disintegrated.

Great revolutions which strike the eye at a glance must have been preceded by a still and secret revolution in the spirit of the age, a revolution not visible to every eye, especially imperceptible to contemporaries, and as hard to discern as to describe in words. It is lack of acquaintance with this spiritual revolution which makes the resulting changes astonishing. The supersession of a native and immemorial religion by a foreign one is a revolution which occurs in the spiritual realm itself, and it is thus of a kind whose causes must be found all the more directly in the spirit of the times.¹⁴

Applying this insight to the problem of the loss of Greek unity, Hegel writes:

The fact that (despotism could gain control) already presupposes the loss of that type of feeling and consciousness which, under the name of "virtue" Montesquieu makes the principle of a republican regime and which is readiness to sacrifice one's life for an ideal, an ideal realized for republicans in their country.¹⁵

The secret of the "fall" lies in an inner betrayal of the spiritual content which the Greeks had poured into the form of their life, that is, into national unity.

The ultimate question appears. Why should free men, men who were free not only essentially but actually, not only ideally but really, betray their freedom? That a betrayal of freedom was possible is obvious, for freedom by its very definition includes the possibility of saying "no" as well as "yes." That economic, political, and social trends provided a predisposition, a "temptation," cannot be doubted. Nevertheless, the "decision" itself,

¹⁴Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 156.

the acquiescence which allowed authoritarian patterns to triumph, remains inexplicable. At least Hegel at this point in his career can give no rational answer to this riddle.

It is abundantly clear to him, however, that once the Greek and Roman citizens had betrayed freedom, ensuing developments in every realm of life served to express and to perpetuate the disaster. The paragraph in which Hegel describes the ramifications of the loss of freedom and unity is long despite its succinctness, but it bears quotation because it is the first concrete definition of the milieu in which the concept of estrangement is introduced.

The picture of the state as a product of his own energies disappeared from the citizen's soul. The care and oversight of the whole rested on the soul of one man or a few. Each individual had his own allotted place, a place more or less restricted and different from his neighbor's. The administration of the state machine was intrusted to a small number of citizens, and these served only as single cogs deriving their worth solely from their connection with others. Each man's allotted part in the congeries which formed the whole was so inconsiderable in relation to the whole that the individual did not need to realize this relation or to keep it in view. Usefulness to the state was the great end which the state set before its subjects, and the end they set before themselves in their political life was gain, self-maintenance, and perhaps vanity. All activity and every purpose now had a bearing on something individual; activity was no longer for the sake of a whole or an ideal. Either everyone worked for himself or else he was compelled to work for some other individual. Freedom to obey self-given laws, to follow self-chosen leaders in peacetime and self-chosen generals in war, to carry out plans in whose formulation one had had one's share--all this vanished. All political freedom vanished also; the citizen's right gave him only a right to the security of that property which now filled his entire world. Death, the phenomenon which demolished the whole structure of his purposes, the activity of his entire life, must have become something terrifying, since nothing survived him... .. He also found no refuge in his gods. They too were individual and incomplete beings and could not satisfy the demands of a universal ideal. Greeks and Romans

were satisfied with gods so poorly equipped only because they had the eternal and self-subsistent within their own hearts...In this situation faith in something stable or absolute was impossible; obedience to another's will and another's legislation was habitual. Without a country of his own, the citizen lived in a polity with which no joy could be associated, and all he felt was its pressure. He had a worship to whose celebrations and festivals he could no longer bring a cheerful heart, because cheerfulness had flown away out of his life.¹⁶

Atomization, isolation, impersonalization, mechanization--these are the marks of estrangement from the free unity and the united freedom of truly human existence. Life has become externalized, superficial. The dimension of depth no longer shines through the variegated elements which formerly it had unified into a creative, coherent, meaningful whole. These elements have been "precipitated out of solution." Instead of mutual cooperation and enhancement, the individual now experiences isolated individuality, separation from his fellows, rivalry and conflict and perpetual frustration. Unity is no longer natural, organic. It must be achieved artificially. It must be imposed on the group and on the individual alike.

Under these conditions life goes on. The human enterprise does not lapse into complete chaos. But man does not live by bread alone. The human spirit may estrange itself from the freedom which is its true essence, and it may as a result find itself blocked morally and religiously, but it does not die. A remnant of freedom remains, and that remnant is the freedom of reason, which "can never give up finding practical principles, the absolute and self-subsistent reality, somewhere or other."¹⁷ Reason's task, however,

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 156-158

¹⁷Ibid., p. 145

is an almost impossible one. Where are the practical principles to be found if these are no longer operative in man's will? How is private religion to undergird ethical motivation if the rational autonomy whose emotional complement it is cannot be exercised? How is public religion to celebrate the joy of life of a united people if the free unity of that life has been destroyed? A moral, religious, cultural vacuum has been created. What spirit will supply the content which can mould the forms of life in the situation of estrangement?

It is Hegel's melancholy duty to record that historically an unhealthy spirit stepped in to attempt to fill the vacuum, a spirit born of frustration and desperation. He anticipates the "failure of nerve" theory by diagnosing the cause of this unfortunate development as a radical dislocation in man's understanding of himself and of his essential participation in the divine. The finite and the infinite became separated, the human and the divine elements in human nature became estranged from one another. The result was that the human was degraded. Men allowed the sorry facts of their life in a disintegrating society to persuade them that they were helpless, not because they were living warped lives but because human nature is essentially corrupt. Such doctrines of original sin simply reinforced their feelings of helplessness and turned any belief in human potentialities or any attempt at a reaffirmation of the power of rational freedom into a sin. The counterpart of the devaluation of the divine element which had been separated from the divine could only be an over-valuation of the divine element which had been separated from the human. The divine was projected heavenward and endowed with all the powers man pos-

esses essentially but which in that situation men did not, or could not, exercise. The fateful consequences of this objectification of the divine into a supreme being dwelling in a faraway place called heaven cannot be exaggerated. For not only did men become dependent on this supreme being for power to act, but they also found themselves forced to look to him for detailed instructions regarding specific actions in specific situations. The loss of freedom which lay at the root of their difficulties issued in moral abdication. Morals had to be taken over by default by authoritarian religion.

The scope of the dominion exercised by the pagan gods, who hitherto had haunted nature only, was extended...over the free world of mind. The right of legislation was ceded to God exclusively, but, not content with this, men looked to him for every good impulse, every better purpose and decision. These were regarded as his work, not in the sense in which the Stoics ascribed every good thing to the deity because they thought of their souls as sparks of the divine or as generated by God, but as the work of a being outside us in whom we have no part, a being foreign to us with whom we have nothing in common.¹⁸

The implications of the development become clear when we remember Hegel's ideal of true humanity:

The right to legislate for one's self, to be responsible for one's self alone for administering one's own law, is one which no man may renounce, for that would be to cease to be a man altogether.¹⁹

The fact remains that vast numbers of men gave up this right. They needed consolation, security, guidance, and the assurance that a power greater than themselves would do for them what they believed they could not do. So they gave up their

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 160

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 145

rational freedom and became less than fully human. They became living embodiments of estrangement. And the religion which men erected to answer their needs, the expression of their estrangement in authoritarian institutional form, was Christianity.

Interestingly enough, the first question to which Hegel devotes himself in his study of Christianity is whether Jesus should be blamed for it. Like many men who have attacked the church, Hegel reveres Jesus as a person.²⁰ He exonerates him by making the familiar distinction between the religion of Jesus and the religion about him. Jesus taught a true religion, "true religion" being defined as Kant defined it. He "undertook to raise religion and virtue to morality and to restore to morality the freedom which is in its essence."²¹ But he was born into a Jewish milieu which

²⁰In his essay on Kant which appears as the introduction to a translation of Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, Greene compares the approach of Kant to Jesus with that of Lessing. "Lessing's view of the development of the religious consciousness is more truly historical than is Kant's; yet they arrive at the same goal and conceive the essence of religion to consist in much the same thing. The piety of their respective homes remained for each of them a deep and abiding influence. Both interpreted the 'religion of Jesus' as distinguished from the 'Christian religion' in thoroughly moral terms, and neither had the least respect for the notion of salvation through this or that particular belief." Greene and Hudson, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone (Chicago: Open Court, 1934), p. xxii. A note on the same page refers to fragments written by Lessing and translated under the title, "The Religion of Christ and the Christian Religion," in which the contrast between the religion of Jesus and the religion about him is elaborated.

²¹ETW, p. 69

"Jesus never spoke against the established religion itself, but only against the moral superstition that the demands of the moral law were satisfied by observance of the usages which that religion ordained. He urged not a virtue grounded on authority (which is either meaningless or a direct contradiction in terms), but a free virtue springing from man's own being." (*Ibid.*, p. 71)

It might be mentioned here that one of the sections of Nohl's collection not included in Knox's translations is a "Life of Jesus," about which Kroner says in his introduction, "Hegel's

was spiritually akin to the shattered Graeco-Roman world, to that mysterious "spirit of the times" which caused and fostered estrangement. The Jews were subject to an authoritarian, legalistic moral system. They too looked upon religion as something objective. They too surrendered their reason and freedom to a God who was conceived to be a being among other beings, a God whose nature was strange and alien to man. Despite all their religious feeling the followers of Jesus still were citizens of the Jewish state. For a little while Jesus gave them a glimpse of freedom, of a life in which their reason would give itself its own law and be able to follow its own commands. But their reason was too immature, too unpracticed in following commands of its own. It was unacquainted with the enjoyment of self-won freedom, and consequently it was soon subjected once more to the yoke of formalism.²²

Hegel's summary of the process by which the religion of Jesus was distorted into a religion about him is succinct and to the point:

Those who kept and disseminated his religion were led to base the knowledge of God's will, and the obligation to obey it, solely on the authority of Jesus, and then set up the recognition of this authority as part of the divine will and so as a duty. The result of this was to make reason a purely receptive faculty, instead of a legislative one, to make whatever could be proved to be the teaching of Jesus, or, later, of his vicars, an object of reverence purely and simply because it was the teaching of Jesus or God's will, and something bound up with salvation or damnation. Even moral doctrines, now made obligatory in a positive sense, i.e., not on their account, but as commanded

most interesting 'experiment' with Kant's philosophy is an essay on the 'Life of Jesus,' in which Jesus appears as a teacher of Kant's purely moral religion." (Ibid., p. 5.) Obviously Hegel still approaches Jesus from this point of view in the essay we are considering.

²² Cf. Ibid., p. 99.

by Jesus, lost the inner criterion whereby their necessity is established, and were placed on the same level with every other positive, specific command, with every external ordinance grounded in circumstances or on mere prudence.²³

Having embraced the idea of a wholly transcendent and authoritarian God, Christianity possessed an unmistakable affinity with "the spirit of the times." It was in a position to offer the Graeco-Roman world the sort of religion it wanted. The expansion of the tiny sect of Christians into the church which would be the inheritor of empire was under way. Hegel proceeds to launch his attack on the various ways in which the unfortunate development of the church into an authoritarian institution has affected the history of Europe ever since the Apostle Paul answered the call of the Maecedonians to come over and "help" them. We cannot follow him from point to point. The idea of estrangement is the presupposition of the "positivity" of the Christian religion which he analyzes, and we already have suggested its main features. But Hegel does give illuminating examples of the unities of life which the church has broken and of how it has broken them. We

²³Ibid., pp. 85-86. In an earlier fragment Hegel asks what underlies faith in Jesus as a personified ideal, and he concludes that the deification of Jesus presupposes a devaluation of human nature. "Why do the examples other men give us not suffice to strengthen us in the struggle with evil, to feel the divine spark within us, to make this power within us master over the sensuous? Why do we not recognize in virtuous men that they are not merely flesh of our flesh, limb of our limb? Why do we not feel moral sympathy with them, feel that they are spirit of our spirit, power of our power? Alas, we have been persuaded that these capabilities are alien to us, that man belongs solely to the order of nature, explicitly to fallen nature. We have completely isolated the idea of holiness, we have assigned it only to a distant being, and we consider confinement in a sensuous nature incompatible with it. . . . This debasement of human nature, therefore, makes it impossible for us to recognize ourselves in virtuous men. In place of such an ideal, which would be a picture of virtue for us, we need a God-man." Nohl, op. cit., p. 67.

shall look at a few of these with a view toward sharpening the definition of estrangement as Hegel understands it.²⁴

First we shall note the effect of the church on the unity of individual personality. Hegel charges that the church has broken the unity of the outer and the inner elements of reason as these apply to morality. The inner faculty, that of legislation, has been exteriorized. It should be active but now it is passive. Instead of deducing ethical actions from the moral, necessary, and universally valid laws which it has set up for itself, reason under the tutelage of the church is required to ascribe to the irrational historical givenness of a list of requirements derived from Jesus and from tradition the dignity and binding power which belong to ethical principles alone. From the standpoint of reason this is arbitrary. From the standpoint of freedom it is authoritarian. In this situation the rational ordering of life is impossible.²⁵

²⁴It should be noted that the Roman church bears the brunt of Hegel's attack. He believes that in principle the Protestant churches represent a re-affirmation of "the right in matters of religious opinion to follow one's own self-wrought or self-acquired conviction." ETW, p. 146. The freedom affirmed here implies moral freedom also. It must be added, however, that in Hegel's eyes the Protestant churches have not been true to their origin. They too have become positive, objective, heteronomous.

²⁵"The fundamental error at the bottom of the church's entire system is that it ignores the rights pertaining to every faculty of the human mind, in particular to the chief of them, reason. Once the church's system ignores reason, it can be nothing save a system which despises man. The powers of the human mind have a domain of their own and this domain was separated off science by Kant. This salutary separation has not been made by the church in its legislating activity, and centuries have still to elapse before the European mind learns to make and recognize this distinction in practical life and in legislation, although the Greeks had been brought to this point automatically by their sound intuition. In Greek religion, or in any other

The alienation of man from the inner springs of ethical insight leads to great psychological difficulties. Hegel suggests that the secret of the tremendous missionary impetus of the church lies in the fact that men who are estranged from reason tend to become intolerant, aggressive, imperialistic. As long as reason is the ultimate criterion, innumerable voluntary associations may be formed by people on the basis of mutual interests or similar convictions without serious danger of conflict and aggrandizement. But the Christians acknowledged no inner criterion; they accepted certain objective teachings and traditions as universally authoritative. Inevitably they vaguely sensed the arbitrariness of their faith. They were subject to doubts, and the burden of anxiety induced them to seek certainty and security in winning new converts to their cause. Hegel's analysis here is very interesting:

Faith in virtue is supported by the sense of virtue's inevitability, the sense that it is one with one's innermost self. But in the case of any article in a positive faith, the believer strives to banish both his own sense that it may still admit of doubts and also the experiences of others in whom these doubts have become strengthened into reasons for rejecting that positive faith, and he does this by trying to collect as many people as possible under the banner of his positive faith.²⁶

The yoke of faith, like any other, becomes more tolerable the more associates we have in bearing it, and, when we attempt to make a proselyte, our secret reason is often our resentment that another should be free from chains

whose underlying principle is a pure morality, the moral commands of reason, which are subjective, were not treated or set up as if they were the objective rules with which the understanding deals. But the Christian Church has taken the subjective element in reason and set it up as a rule as if it were something objective."

²⁶Ibid., p. 93.

which we carry ourselves and which we lack the strength to loose.²⁷

That this is not the whole story of the expansion of Christianity should not deter us from appreciating the shrewd insight Hegel displays in these thrusts. As a matter of fact, in his analysis of the phenomenal success of the new religion he places greater emphasis on the failure of the church to place its power motives under rational criticism, and the consequent consecration of fighting, murder, defamation, burning at the stake, stealing, lying, and betrayal because these were being done "on God's behalf."²⁸

The objectification of the moral law by the church is only half the story. Not only does the church give man precise directions regarding the knowledge he must possess in order to be saved, but it also defines a series of different "dispositions" (emotional states) which are supposed to flow from that knowledge in a prescribed order. For instance, consciousness of sin, then repentance, then awareness of forgiveness.²⁹ This is a necessary consequence of the view that the truth is something outside man, something given. Under these circumstances the church must try to produce

²⁷ Ibid., p. 94

²⁸ Ibid., p. 163 Hegel holds that the purpose Christians ascribed to their objective God was poles apart from the world's moral goal. "It was whittled down not simply to the propagation of Christianity, but to ends adopted by a single sect, or by individuals, particularly priests, and suggested by the individual's passions, by vainglory, pride, ambition, envy, hatred, and the like." (Ibid., p. 162) This is typical Enlightenment vitriol. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that Hegel records with satisfaction the fact that the missionary fervor of the European church of his day is definitely on the wane. Cf. Ibid., pp. 94-95.

²⁹ Cf. Ibid., pp. 136-137

ethical motivation synthetically, flying in the face of the fact that the spirit or the disposition is too ethereal a thing to be confined in formulas, in verbal imperatives, or to be manifested in feelings or attitudes of mind manufactured to order.³⁰ This program is bound to end in self-deception, doubt, and anxiety. The self-deception takes the form of

the belief that one has the prescribed feeling, that one's feeling corresponds with what one finds described in the books, though a feeling thus artificially produced could not possibly be equivalent to the true and natural feeling either in force or in value.³¹

If the false tranquillity induced by the notion that these feelings grown in a spiritual hothouse are authentic is punctured, the doubt leads to a sense of helplessness and self-distrust which may develop into unhealthy and damaging anxiety.

Often, too, he falls into despair if he thinks that, despite all his good will and every possible effort, his feelings have still not been intensified to the extent required of him. Since he is in the realm of feeling and can never reach any firm criterion of his perfection (except perhaps via deceptive imagining), he lapses into a frenzy of anxiety which lacks all strength and decision and which finds a measure of peace only in trusting on the boundless mercy of God.³²

We have seen that both rationally and emotionally the externalization of morals and religion leads to psychological instability, to symptoms of a serious disorientation of the basic elements of personality. Most Christians, of course, do not experience vividly the threatening undercurrents which are implicit

³⁰ Cf. Ibid., p. 138.

³¹ Ibid., p. 140.

³² Ibid., p. 141. Hegel calls casuistry and monastic asceticism the highest developments of this tendency. Luther immediately comes to mind, and in a footnote Knox suggests that this section of Hegel's essay should interest students of Kierkegaard, for whom the category of Angst is of special importance.

in their religion. But Hegel goes on to point out that the most obvious symbol of the "split personality" produced by the church is the common experience of the compartmentalization of life into sacred and secular spheres, to which corresponds the division of the personality into a "spiritual self" and an "ordinary self." The church as master of the sacred sphere cultivates the spiritual self, while the ordinary self carries on the person's activities in the work-a-day world.

The ordinary self goes on acting as before alongside the spiritual self and is at best dressed up by the latter with rhetorical phraseology and external gestures. In trade and commerce the ordinary man appears, but he is a different person altogether on Sundays or under the eyes of his co-religionists or in reading his prayer-book. To charge a man like this with hypocrisy is often too harsh, because hypocrisy strictly entails a consciousness of the contradiction between the label given to an action and the motives behind it; in this instance this consciousness is altogether lacking, and the man is not a unity at all.³³

A third realm of personality remains to be discussed in addition to the realms of intellect and emotion. What happens to imagination and consequently to cultural creativity when the sacred and the secular have become separate and exclusive spheres, and when the church claims sole authority over the dimension of ultimate meaning? Imagination is either regimented or starved. The regimentation, says Hegel, is due to the fact that the church must use every available means to make it impossible for its members to fall into doubt or to light upon other people's opinions in matters of faith.

The doctrines of the church have been armed with all imaginative terrors so that, just as certain magicians are supposed to be able to inhibit the use of physical capacities,

³³Ibid., p. 141

these doctrines are able to paralyze all psychical capacities or else coerce them to function solely in accordance with this doctrinal imagery.³⁴

For individuals who are educated and sophisticated, the result is the familiar "split personality" pattern carried over into cultural life.

There are two roads which lead to different regions of the next world and never meet: one road is that of domestic affairs, science, and fine art; the other is the church's, and a man who travels the former with the most profound and subtle intellect, with the keenest wit, and with fine sensibilities, is unrecognizable if met on the church's road, and some of these qualities are perceptible in him there.³⁵

Hegel saves his most bitter attacks, however, for the starvation of imagination among uneducated people which is the direct consequence of the church's systematic destruction of the indigenous national religions it encountered in its expansion. The church insisted that the Bible must be accepted as the only legitimate source of inspiration, which meant that the folk religions of myth, legend, and sacred places must be suppressed, along with the creation of objects of veneration which they had inspired.

Christianity has emptied Valhalla, felled the sacred groves, extirpated the national imagery as a shameful superstition, as a devilish poison, and given us instead the imagery of a nation whose laws, climate, culture, and interests are strange to us and whose history has no connection whatever with our own.³⁶

Hegel asks, "Is Judea, then, the Teutons' fatherland?" The church answers "yes," and limits indigenous religion to faith in local saints and miracle workers. Hegel answers "no," but he

³⁴Ibid., p. 133

³⁵Ibid., p. 134

³⁶Ibid., p. 146

realizes that "the project of restoring to a nation an imagery once lost was always doomed to failure,"³⁷ so he must content himself with a sarcastic contrast between the cultural and social function of religious sagas built upon the history of the Greek people, and the function which sacred history has for Christians. The Greeks had their religious sagas almost exclusively for the purpose of having gods to whom they could devote their gratitude, build altars, and offer sacrifices. Christian sacred history is supposed to have many uses, chiefly to teach men all sorts of moral truths. Since, however, most of the Old Testament stories contain only the morality which one reads into them himself,

the chief utility of these stories to a pious man, and the chief effect of them in himself, is edification, i.e., the awakening of obscure feelings of saintliness (because he is now occupied with ideas about God).³⁸

The net effect, therefore, has been that the church has poisoned the wells of natural imaginative creativity in every people it has "conquered." It has estranged men from the deepest roots of their common life. Just as it has encouraged the atrophy of reason by forcing it to submit to heteronomous demands, and just as it has encouraged the atrophy of emotion by forcing it into narrowly prescribed channels, so it also has encouraged the atrophy of imagination by depriving it of its natural objects.

In so doing the church has made the achievement of true social solidarity impossible. Hegel devotes more space in this essay to the involved relationships between the church and the

³⁷Ibid., p. 149

³⁸Ibid., p. 151

civil state than to any other topic. This is to be expected, for as was pointed out at the beginning, he not only sees the individual and society as fundamentally inseparable, but he pictures the nation as the ultimate focus of all unity and meaning. The institutional growth of the church, and its successful struggle for political as well as spiritual power, has led to wide-spread acceptance of the church as a false substitute for the nation as the symbol of fulfillment.

The idea of the church took the place of a motherland and a free polity.... The difference between the two was that, in the idea of the church, freedom could have no place, and, while the state was complete on earth, the church was most intimately connected with heaven.³⁹

From the standpoint of Hegel's ideal the church is heretical, for it is a schismatic part of the whole which separates itself from the rest and pretends to possess the ultimacy which only the total unity of national life rightly can claim. The fact that a struggle for power between the church and the state in Europe could develop is proof of the fact that society had become estranged from its essential unity. Nor does Hegel see a way out of the dilemma, for not only does the church continue to press its false pretense of ultimacy, but the state as it has existed for centuries has been a despotic distortion of the true state, and in order to maintain its authoritarian power it has entered into an unholy alliance with the church, rather than to continue struggling against it in the name of the ideal of a free and united nation. "The church has taught men to despise civil and political freedom as dung in comparison with heavenly blessings and the

³⁹Ibid., p. 162.

enjoyment of eternal life,"⁴⁰ and as soon as the priesthood has extinguished all freedom of will in each new generation the state in its distorted form steps in to reap the benefits of this training in supine obedience. Thus Hegel identifies the root of modern ills as the fateful combination of political absolutism and religious transcendentalism in mutual support against all tendencies toward the re-establishment of freedom and unity, both in particular realms of life and in an all-embracing culture.⁴¹

* * * *

The reader will have noted that two motifs appear again and again in the examples of estrangement which have been described. These motifs are separation and externalization. Estrangement may be defined as the separation of what should be united through the externalization of what should be internal. The individual and society should be united. Under the conditions of estrangement the state is an alien power which exerts unremitting external pressure on citizens who possess no active

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 138

⁴¹ This description of the interplay of political absolutism and doctrinal authoritarianism comes straight out of the social and religious situation of Hegel's day. He lived in Württemberg, in the southern part of Germany, where for generations the territorial church had given uncritical support to an extreme political despotism. In 1770 the territorial prince had agreed to some slight constitutional limitations on his power, but the new arrangement did not overcome political absolutism because now absolute power simply was divided between the prince and the feudal oligarchy. It is not surprising, then, that Hegel should write to Schelling in 1795: "Religion and politics have played the same game. The former has taught what despotism wanted to teach, contempt for humanity and the incapacity of men to achieve the good and to fulfill his essence through his own efforts." (Quoted by Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory. (London: The Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 11-12.

political interest because their participation in politics is blocked. Man and man should be united. Under the conditions of estrangement social class wars against social class and men follow their own individual self-interest because they are not bound together internally (spiritually) by an ultimate loyalty to the ideal of national unity. The individual should be unified with himself. Under the conditions of estrangement the infinite component of human nature is interpreted to be an external divine being whose power is experienced as a heteronomous law, while the finite components of human nature are distorted or frustrated because they do not participate internally (spiritually) in the freedom of reason. Finally, the sacred and the secular should be united. Under the conditions of estrangement state and church are separated, and the church claims the ultimate loyalty of men for a fulfillment of life to be accomplished not on earth but in heaven, and it offers this remote ("external") fulfillment in return for complete submission to its external authority over reason (morals), emotion (religion), and imagination (culture).

In the light of the foregoing description of estrangement, Hegel's central problem comes into sharp focus. Given this situation, how is that which has become separated and externalized to be re-appropriated into unity? Throughout his essay Hegel seems to presuppose that if reason is released from heteronomous bondage it will be able to reunite the estranged elements of life. Kant has demonstrated that "the powers of the human mind have a domain of their own,"⁴² and it would seem that the free

⁴²Cf. note on page 20, footnote 25.

exercise of mind expressed practically through the moral autonomy taught by Jesus and spelled out by Kant should create a new human situation, integrated and harmonious. Yet this new age seems far away.

It has been reserved in the main for our epoch to vindicate at least in theory the human ownership of the treasures formerly squandered on heaven; but what age will have the strength to validate this right in practice and make itself its possessor?⁴³

Why the delay? Is it merely the lag between insight and accomplishment, between diagnosis and cure? Is it perhaps a matter of the time between comprehension of human possibilities on the part of a few individuals and this comprehension on the part of enough people so that a renovation of cultural and social life can be accomplished? Hegel does not say. But there is internal evidence which suggests that his idea of reason suffers a dislocation in the course of the essay, so that the Kantian reason which he employs critically turns out to be different from the Greek reason which he admires.

There is an unmistakable trend in Hegel's analysis of Christianity toward a more and more "transcendental" application of rational criteria to historical facts. He begins with a definition of positivity which makes it synonymous with heteronomy; he ends with a definition which practically identifies positivity with plain historicity. Reason now is not the power which shapes the forms of life. It is the spectator which stands over against every particular and judges it in the name of the universal, over everything temporal in the name of the eternal, over everything

⁴³ETW, p. 159

finite in the name of the infinite. Christianity is castigated simply because it has appeared in spatial and temporal forms, quite apart from the question of authoritarianism. It would seem that Hegel has been operating with two concepts of reason. The first, as seen in Greek life, is creative and harmonious; the second is analytical. To the degree to which analytical reason is dependent on disunities which it can dissect, it is an expression of the estranged situation it analyzes. Thus the crowning irony is that the very instrument which is able to see and to describe estrangement is powerless to effect reconciliation.

Meanwhile, although Kantian reason overcomes estrangement in theory but not in fact, it does expose existing disunities. This is all to the good, so far as it goes. Analysis reveals the true dimensions of the human problem. It can bring men to the very boundary of their existence by insisting that estrangement cannot be ignored and by reminding them that it contradicts their true potentialities. But the question still remains: Is there any discoverable power of reconciliation whereby estrangement may be overcome? Hegel is unwilling to remain defeatist. Within a year after writing this essay, he approaches this question again with the conviction that he has experienced a reconciling power. In the light of this new insight he reformulates the concept of estrangement in the fragments which have been entitled "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate."

CHAPTER TWO

"The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate" begins once again with an account of paradise and the fall. But the scene of action has been widened and the protagonists of the drama have undergone a metamorphosis. The symbol of disunity is no longer Christianity, nor is the historical genesis of estrangement traced to a vague "spirit of the times." The primal unity is that of man and nature, rather than the unity of the individual and society, and the primal loss of unity is traced to an attitude of hostility against nature. This attitude is symbolized by the spirit of the patriarch Abraham and of his descendants, and it is with a biography of the Jewish spirit that Hegel introduces his renewed wrestling with the problem of estrangement and reconciliation.

Paradise is now pre-historical; it is the realm of possibilities. The symbol of the possibility of disruption between man and nature is the great flood in the time of Noah. Into the undeveloped innocence of human experience there catapults this cosmic disaster, whose destructive power leads men to feel that nature might be a hostile entity seeking to destroy them. They are faced with a fundamental decision. Is nature their "fatherland," their true home, or is it dangerous enemy territory? Should they settle down to a pastoral existence and make a portion of the earth an integral part of their world, or must they wander as nomads over the face of the earth, perpetually aloof, perpetually distrustful of nature? Hegel analyzes the possi-

bility of separation from nature in terms of two fundamental axioms. First, the only relationship there can be between hostile entities is that of victor and vanquished, of master and slave. This means that if men decide that nature is their enemy they inevitably must strive for mastery over it. Second, since the whole can be divided only into idea and reality, supreme mastery lies either in something thought or in something real. This means that in their struggle to conquer nature men can employ the strategy of physical control, or they can rely on the power of mind over matter, that is, on controlling knowledge. Nimrod, the great hunter, is the symbol of the attempt to master nature physically. His attempt is bound to fail, since in terms of physical power a mere fragment of the universe cannot hope to conquer the whole. Noah is the symbol of the attempt to master nature by means of thought. He conceives of nature as comprehended completely by a real supreme being opposite it. Then he thinks of himself as subordinate to this being but superior to nature. He tries to buy freedom from nature and power over it at the price of slavery to an exterior power greater than nature and himself combined (God). This strategy also is a failure. Once nature and man are conceived to be separate and hostile entities, with man standing in unreconciled opposition (transcendence) to nature, no amount of theoretical unification can accomplish actual reconciliation. Unification in terms of thought alone is at most "a peace of necessity," which perpetuates the hostility.

In contrast Hegel cites the case of Deucalion and Pyrrha,

Greek survivors of a flood in their time, who were not excited to hostility against nature.

They invited men once again to friendship with the world, to nature, made them forget their need and their hostility in joy and pleasure, made a peace of love, were the progenitors of more beautiful peoples, and made their age the mother of a new-born natural life which maintained its bloom of youth.¹

An earlier fragment included in Nohl's collection contains a "hymn to the Greeks" which expresses more fully the relationship to nature which Hegel is praising.

Alas, from the distant days of the past an image comes before a soul possessing a feeling for human beauty, for the greatness in the great. It is the image of a people of genius among nations, a son of fortune, of freedom, an elect of fair fancy. He too was chained to mother earth by the iron bond of necessity, but by the aid of his feelings and imagination he so elaborated it, so refined and beautified it, and with the aid of the graces so entwined it with roses, that he was satisfied with these fetters, as if they were his own work, a part of himself. His servants were gladness, joy, and grace, the consciousness of their power and their freedom filled his soul. His more serious playmates were friendship and love, not the faun, but sensitive-souled Amor, adorned with all the graces of heart and lovely dreams.²

The Greeks reconcile themselves with nature in spite of its "otherness" and in spite of its often destructive power; and they accomplish this reconciliation through appreciation and participation. They treat nature as if it were a part of themselves. They make it an integral portion of their world. They love it. Their freedom is not control over the earth but the free play of emotion and imagination within the realm of nature, permeating its multifarious powers and objects with beauty and with meaning.

¹Ibid., p. 185.

²Nohl, op. cit., p. 28. trans. by Gray.

There is an ambiguity, however, in this ideal possibility. Does the as if mean that disruption of the unity between man and nature is not actualized? Or does it mean that there is a real disruption which is treated as if it were overcome, although in fact it persists? Hegel does not say. This much is clear, the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha is meant to symbolize the possibility of a creative interaction and ultimate union of transcendence over nature and immanence in it.

The prologue ends. The possibilities have been described. History begins, and with it the drama of estrangement. Or we should say, history began, for now we shift to past tense. Abraham, the archtypal nomad, actualized Noah's possibility. Through him estrangement became a fateful historical power. Abraham wanted to be "a wholly self-subsistent, independent man. He wanted not to love, wanted to be free by not loving."³ The first act which made Abraham the progenitor of a nation was a disavowance which snapped the bonds of communal life and love. He spurned all of the "beautiful" relationships of his youth by leaving home. He lived a nomadic life in order not to become reconciled to nature. If he had settled down to a pastoral existence, he would have become attached to parts of his environment and "might have adopted them as parts of his world."⁴ The religious theophanies he experienced in certain groves did not bind him to nature, for he did not credit nature with participa-

³ETW, p. 185.

⁴Ibid., p. 186.

tion in the divine. Among men he always remained a foreigner, cunning and suspicious in situations where he was weak, ruthless and oppressive in situations where he was strong. He never related himself to other persons on an equal footing. The one love he had, love for his son, troubled his all-exclusive heart to such an extent that he wished to destroy it, and was quieted only because he became certain that this love was not strong enough to render him unable to kill Isaac.

Abraham regarded the whole world as simply his opposite; if he did not take it to be a nullity, he looked on it as sustained by the God who was alien to it. Nothing in nature was supposed to have any part in God; everything was simply under God's mastery.⁵

Since Abraham himself determined to live by the idea of complete self-subsistence and independence, and since this was an attitude of contempt rather than an attitude of love, of separation rather than of union, the ideal (the God) he projected as the guarantor of his idea had to be as exclusive and as loveless as Abraham himself.

In the jealous God of Abraham and his posterity there lay the horrible claim that He alone was God and that this nation was the only one to have a God.⁶

Hegel goes on to interpret the history of the Hebrew people as a progressive working out of the implications of Abraham's character. The theme which runs through the story is that the final dissolution of the Hebrew national state was a consequence of the inability of the Jews to conceive of a complex type of unity which could embrace elements different from each

⁵Ibid., p. 187.

⁶Ibid., p. 180.

other and external to each other without destroying their separate identity. To them unity always meant numerical unity, literal oneness, and this notion became a driving force in their life through the idea of the jealous and omnipotent oneness of God. The peculiar way in which this notion operated both in their thinking and their acting was determined by the fact that they conceived of man as occupying a position between God and nature, below God and above nature. Thus with respect to God the Jews acknowledged themselves to be "nothing." They developed no appreciable degree of moral autonomy, but rather submitted to the "positive" heteronomous demands of God as these were codified in the Mosaic legislation (the law was given to the people; they did not give the law to themselves). From generation to generation the law of Moses enforced the remembrance of "the nullity of man and the littleness of an existence maintained by favor" in every area of life. As a fitting climax to his picture of the "slave mentality" forced on the Jews by their idea of God, Hegel seizes on the biblical account of God's refusal to allow Moses to enter the Promised Land: "He died in punishment for a tiny initiative which stirred in him on the one occasion when he struck one single unbidden blow."⁷ The Jews never experienced real freedom because the only relationship between man and God which they knew defined human freedom as per se rebellion against God.

With respect to the world (nature and non-Jewish peoples), however, the Jews attempted to be "everything." That is, they

⁷Ibid., p. 199.

fanatically asserted their identity, and in their efforts to achieve exclusive self-maintenance they held "the world" in contempt and tried to dominate it completely. Thus they based their life on an unstable combination of submission to God and domination of the world. Hegel suggests that an outward sign of the inner discord which this caused was the compensatory streak of destructiveness which appeared again and again during the exodus period when the Jews were fighting for a place in the sun. On their way to the Promised Land they never accommodated themselves to the ways of the peoples they encountered. They conquered by destroying. They carried the logic of the notion of numerical unity to its final conclusion. For exclusive self-maintenance implies that the very existence of other selves (groups) is a threat to one's own identity, and that this threat can be overcome completely only through the annihilation of every self (group) other than one's own. Success in this effort wins unity, to be sure, but it is unity in isolation, an isolated identity which is related to nothing outside itself. In this context Hegel speaks a profound word: "It is only over death that unity hovers."⁸ Eventually the Jews themselves were destroyed as a nation because they were unable to resolve this pattern of hostility and conflict, this drive toward uncompromising transcendence over the world at the expense of participation in it.

Final destruction, however, was preceded by centuries of uneasy oscillation between isolation and participation. True

⁸Ibid., p. 188.

to his thesis that the objective conditions under which people live are a formative factor in determining their spirit, Hegel sees the transition from nomadic life to agricultural life following the conquest of Canaan as an opportunity for the Jews to become "humanized."

What unites men is the spirit and nothing else, and what now separated the Jews from the Canaanites was their spirit alone.⁹

He believes that this spirit might have been modified, for when the Jews took over the country they did not systematically destroy everything and everybody. They were not completely true to their genius of hatred, which would have called for utter extermination of the old inhabitants. In this Hegel finds a remnant of "original righteousness."

Even here the honor of human nature is still partly preserved in the fact that, even if its innermost spirit is perverted and turned into hatred, human nature still does not wholly disavow its original essence, and its perversion is not wholly consistent, is not carried through to the end.¹⁰

perversion is not wholly consistent, is not carried
As a matter of fact, when¹⁰ their physical distresses were alleviated during periods of political independence, the Jews renounced the spirit of hostility and became partially assimilated. Humane feelings arose in their hearts, and this produced a more friendly atmosphere. They "reverenced more beautiful spirits" and served strange gods. They began to appreciate the meaning of participation, of love. But as soon as they were militarily threatened, "oppression aroused hatred once more, and thereupon their God

⁹Ibid., p. 194

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 194-195

reawakened."¹¹ They fell back into the darkness of dependence on God (unreconciled transcendence) with its corollary of attempted domination over the world. The inevitable end was destruction of the Jews by powers external to themselves whose attacks they invited by their own hostility.

The great tragedy of the Jewish people is no Greek tragedy; it can arouse neither terror nor pity, for both of these arise only out of the fate which follows from the inevitable slip of a beautiful character; it can arouse horror alone. The fate of the Jewish people is the fate of Macbeth who stepped out of nature itself, clung to alien Beings, and so in their service had to trample and slay everything holy in human nature, had at last to be forsaken by his gods (since these are objects and he their slave) and be dashed to pieces on his faith itself.¹²

So far we have described Hegel's criticism of Jewish history in terms of the relation of the Jews to God and their relation to the world. The core of his criticism, however, is to be found in his treatment of the effect of the fundamental attitude of the Jews on the character of their own life. In conceiving of God as a Being who is the sum of all truth and all relations, the Jews implied that both man and nature are intrinsically worthless, devoid of any independent ontological standing. They denied the dimension of freedom, of truth, of meaning, of creativity in man and nature. They reduced nature to the level of brute material fact and reduced man's life to the level of an animal existence in which eating and drinking and the amassing of material possessions are the highest possibilities. The Jews were physically virile but culturally sterile. Hegel points to

¹¹Ibid., p. 201

¹²Ibid., p. 205

Jewish history as proof of his contention. Did the Jews develop an autonomous morality? No, they remained in heteronomous bondage to the Mosaic law. Did they participate creatively in the realm of beauty? No, they distrusted aesthetic experience and never produced great works of art.¹³ Did the Jews devote themselves to a serious search for truth? No, they never produced a philosophy.¹⁴ They "never enjoyed any life or consciousness lifted above eating and drinking."¹⁵ Hegel notes that as a result of the atrophy of an entire dimension of human nature they "had no life left over" when they lost their independence, no spiritual resources whose enjoyment could teach them to bear distress and to make sacrifices. Why did Jewish life never become creative? "The Jews had no share in anything eternal."¹⁶ "The holy was always outside them, unseen and unfelt."¹⁷ The moral is clear. The view that the divine and the human, the supernatural

¹³"The infinite subject had to be invisible, since everything visible is something restricted. . . . An image of God was just stone or wood to them; 'it sees not, it hears not,' etc.--with this litany they fancy themselves wonderfully wise; they despise the image because it does not manage them, and they have no inkling of its deification in the enjoyment of beauty or in a lover's intuition." (Ibid., pp. 191-192)

¹⁴"Truth is something free which we neither master nor are mastered by; hence the existence of God appears to the Jews not as a truth but as a command. On God the Jews are dependent throughout, and that on which a man depends cannot have the form of truth. Truth is beauty intellectually represented; the negative character of truth is freedom. But how could they have an inkling of beauty who saw in everything only matter? How could they exercise reason and freedom who were only either mastered or masters?" (Ibid., p. 196)

¹⁵Ibid., p. 196.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 195.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 193.

and the natural, are "wholly other" makes the incarnation of ultimate meaning in the world of space and time impossible. The divine (goodness, truth, beauty) cannot be thought of as a realm distinct and separate from man and nature without being lost altogether. Cultural creativity signifies that nature, man, and God are being experienced as participating in some fashion in one another. Cultural sterility signifies that they are being experienced as estranged from one another. The definitive mark of estrangement in Jewish life, therefore, is the absence of an indigenous culture rooted in the exclusive monotheism of their religion, which drives a wedge between the human and the divine.

The subsequent circumstances of the Jewish people up to the mean, abject, wretched circumstances in which they still are today, have all of them been simply consequences and elaborations of their original fate. By this fate--an infinite power which they set over against themselves and could never conquer--they have been maltreated and will be continually maltreated until they appease it by the spirit of beauty and so annul it by reconciliation.¹⁸

Obviously we have been studying a parable. Hegel is attacking isolated individualism, unbridled competition, impersonal exploitation of nature, cultural sterility, traditional theism. All of these elements are familiar to him not merely historically, but existentially, for the bourgeois society in which he lives exhibits them profusely. Abraham is a wonderful symbol of the modern uprooted individual, who certainly aims at being a "a wholly self-subsistent, independent man." Abraham's strategy is strikingly similar to the intra-mundane asceticism of Protestant piety, which also "regards the whole world as simply man's opposite," as a means to his private ends, as material to

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 199-200.

be mastered and controlled--and then abandoned. The fundamental point of Hegel's analysis is that if this approach to reality breeds conflict, frustration, and dehumanization, man has only himself to blame. It is he who "causes" estrangement. It is he who turns his neighbor into an enemy and his world into a foreign land. The most important insight Hegel has gained regarding the "mechanism" of estrangement is that in a special way man's intellect is the agent of estrangement. It is the power which enables man to "divide and conquer" reality, and in doing so, to run himself into a dangerous and debilitating impasse.

The two axioms introduced at the very beginning of this section in Hegel's description of Noah indicate that the general context of the problem of estrangement is not man's relationship to the physical universe, but rather the self-world correlation, man's awareness of "inner" and "outer," of subjectivity and objectivity. "Nature" receives the connotation of "world," man's world--the whole of human relationships and human life. The direction in which Hegel is moving becomes clear when we note what happens to the marks of estrangement--separation and externalization--in this context. First he states that hostile entities necessarily struggle with one another for supremacy. Then he adds that the basic entities into which "the whole" can be divided are idea and reality. How do they become divided? The intellect distinguishes between them. It is the intellect which "separates" them and makes them "external" to one another. This means that Hegel has transferred estrangement into the realm of mind. Thus in our parable the Mosaic law is a symbol of the attempt to control human existence rationally on the presupposition of a

rigid body-mind dichotomy, and heteronomy illustrates the self-defeating consequences of this attempt. The exclusively transcendent God of Jewish tradition is a symbol of the role the intellect assumes in attempting to build a total view of life on the presupposition of a rigid subject-object dichotomy, and the constriction of all forms of human creativity (except biological) throughout Jewish history illustrates the dangerous consequences of this attempt. Other applications can be made at will.

This development in the idea of estrangement carries tremendous implications. It puts Hegel in touch with the full sweep of philosophical thought from the Greeks to the present day. More specifically, it places him in a critical and polemical position vis a vis modern European philosophy as it stems from Descartes and culminates in Kant, for Hegel sees in the logically irresolvable dichotomies which are the characteristic problems of this movement nothing less than estrangement in modern dress. He is convinced that as long as the estranged elements of life are dealt with merely theoretically by a philosophy whose method depends on the conceptualizing intellect, there may be a "peace of necessity" now and again, but the sought-for reconciliation will not be achieved. Therefore he is disposed toward a new appreciation of the dimension of "spirit" which is deeper than the dimension of intellect and prior to it, and toward a greater interest in elements of human experience which resist analytical dissection. This opens the way for a reconsideration of the nature and significance of religious phenomena as a possible clue to a power which can overcome estrangement at its source. Hegel records the success of his explorations in a completely reformula-

ted interpretation of the teaching of Jesus, and he reveals that the criterion by which he is able to criticize his contemporaries is no longer merely the Greek ideal, but that he has found in Jesus a new dimension of reconciliation--and therefore a new understanding of estrangement--which goes beyond anything he has known before.

You will remember that Hegel has defined the mission and message of Jesus in "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" as an attempt "to raise religion and virtue to morality and to restore to morality the freedom which is its essence."¹⁹ His definition now is quite different. What Jesus really did was to raise the whole subjectivity of man above bondage to moral commands, no matter how purely rational they may be. "He made undetermined subjectivity, character, a totally different sphere, one which was to have nothing in common with the punctilious following of objective (rational) commands."²⁰ Jesus did not teach rational autonomy; he pointed to a type of freedom which lies deeper in human nature than freedom as exercised by the intellect. Hegel tries to explain what he means by "undetermined subjectivity" by contrasting the Kantian interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, which formerly he had taken to be accurate, with a new understanding of it which he believes expresses Jesus' original intention. For Kant the burden of the Sermon is reverence for law. Life must be comprehended and lived in terms of the moral law. Since the moral law is the law of man's own reason, to

¹⁹Ibid., p. 69.

²⁰Ibid., p. 209.

follow it is to be free in the fullest sense. Hegel claims that this approach is rationalistic, one-sided, and inadequate. Moral laws are conceptual constructs which theoretically unify the various aspects of life. These universal concepts always are alien and objective to concrete emotional processes of life which are just as integral to human nature as is reason itself. It seems to Hegel that Kant's categorical imperative divides man against himself, demanding that duty be obeyed and that inclination be suppressed. In making this demand the imperative sets up reason as the master, identifies inclination as the enemy to be dominated, and calls upon the universality of the concepts of the moral law to play the role of the deity whose omnipotence vindicates reason.²¹ The "ought" in the moral law reveals that the freedom exercised in rational autonomy presupposes and perpetuates the divergence between "both parts of the spirit"-- reason and inclination. The "ought" reveals estrangement. In the light of this analysis the "infinite power which the Jews set over against themselves" can be defined accurately. It is the power of the abstract universal over the particularity of the self and its world. Once the Jews separated the universal from the particular they set the universal against the particular and the particular against the universal in irreconcilable conflict. Against this background of the dilemma of the intellect which must divide in order to conquer, Hegel sketches his new interpretation of Jesus.

The Sermon on the Mount does not teach reverence for the laws; on the contrary, it exhibits that which fulfils

²¹Cf. ibid., p. 214.

the law but annuls it as law and so is something higher than obedience to law and makes law superfluous.²²

Jesus taught a modification of life, that is, he pointed to a dimension of existence, a quality of life, in which reason and inclination are in harmony. In doing so, however, he faced an almost insuperable difficulty, for how was he to communicate an awareness of this dimension? Communication involves the use of concepts, but any conceptualization of the unity of reason and inclination already would be a precipitation out of the unity. It would be open immediately to misunderstanding. Jesus did the best he could, and that best was not very good because the Hebrew language and tradition were so inhospitable to his message. In Kant's hands the accidental phraseology Jesus was forced to use has been fashioned into a moral imperative which is essentially theoretical. Kant reduces "love God first and then your neighbor" to the categorical imperative, not realizing that the whole point of Jesus' message is that love cannot be commanded, that it is beyond the law, that it represents an "is" rather than an "ought," that it is a synthesis of law (reason) and inclination which makes the imperative mood irrelevant.

The "is" is LIFE. The dynamic relationship of different elements within life is LOVE.²³ And Hegel characterizes love experientially as a feeling for the whole.

Only the feeling for the whole, love, can stand in the way of the diremption of man's essence.²⁴

²²Ibid., p. 212.

²³Cf. ibid., p. 215.

²⁴Ibid., p. 217.

The word feeling must not be taken literally, for inclination includes the realm of feelings and inclination is only one side of the synthesis (reason and inclination). It stands for an experience which goes beyond both reason and emotion, but since Hegel is particularly concerned to make clear that it is prior to the intellect, and since there is no adequate concept for this experience, the vague word feeling is his choice.

What is the "whole" for which love is the adequate form of apprehension? So far as human nature is concerned, life as the unity of reason and inclination refers to the whole of essential human nature, man's being taken in its entirety. The terms reason and inclination cannot only be transposed into mind and body, but also into idea and reality, subject and object, etc. Life is the dynamic unity in which all of these polar opposites are joined creatively by love rather than forced into conflict by conceptualization. Awareness of love is an experience of the unity of self and world which transcends (or undergirds) the experience of the differentiation of self and world. The "whole" is the self-world correlation first of all, but ultimately the "whole" is Life, the all-embracing unity in which the sumtotal of men's self-world correlations reside. Therefore love implies some kind of awareness not simply of the unity of one's own self but also an awareness of the unity of all selves and worlds. So far as human existence is concerned, life in love is Hegel's new way of defining the ideal which earlier was expressed somewhat ambiguously as freedom in unity and unity in freedom. Again and again

he uses the word pleroma, fullness, to emphasize that life in love achieves the full potentialities of freedom by spontaneously ordering reality in accordance with that Reason which is more than the intellect, the Reason which is the very structure of freedom.

But the unity of life in love can be denied and is continually being denied. This brings us to the definition of the freedom which Hegel attributes to man, a freedom which is more than rational autonomy. Since the intellect operates in terms of a separation of reason from inclination, this separation must precede the intellect's activity. Something already must have occurred in the realm of spirit, that is, in human nature as a whole, before the intellect begins to function as the agent of estrangement.

Man as man possesses a primordial freedom, the freedom of total self-determination.

Man confronts himself; his character and his deeds become the man himself. He has barriers only where he erects them himself, and his virtues are determinacies which he fixes himself.²⁵

There is a level of decision which commits the entire existence of the person to the substance and implications of whatever decision is made. We have only to consider Abraham again to see what is at stake. The crucial question which faces the human spirit is this: To love or not to love? This means: To participate in the whole of reality or to seek to control reality by dismembering it? "Abraham wanted not to love, to be free by not loving."²⁶ This

²⁵Ibid., pp. 224-225

²⁶Ibid., p. 185

decision transformed his "undetermined subjectivity" into a definite character. This definite character contradicted love, which is the essential quality of life. Therefore all the ramifications of hostility, separation, destructiveness, etc. which his life exhibited were rooted in an act of total self-determination in which Abraham denied his true nature. As we have seen, this decision banished Abraham from paradise, from love (the freedom of immanence) because he relied on the intellect (the freedom of transcendence), and this strategy was self-contradictory in that he came under the power of the conceptualized universal (God) which was just as unreconciled to him as he was to nature.

The crucial question is whether Abraham might have reaffirmed love, might have become reunited with the wholeness of his essential nature and with the wholeness of LIFE. This reaffirmation would have had to be made at the same level at which the original denial had been effected. Is there any evidence in any realm of human experience that such a radical personal reintegration is possible? Hegel believes that the Christian experience of guilt and forgiveness exhibits precisely this return from estrangement to reconciliation.

Jesus...found with nature (i.e., within "life") the connection between sins and the forgiveness of sins, between estrangement from God and reconciliation with him... He placed reconciliation in love and fullness of life, and expressed himself to that effect on every occasion with little change of form.²⁷

To account for this power of self-acceptance and self-reconciliation, Hegel endows the category of Life with the characteristics

²⁷Ibid., p. 239

of biological organisms, whose most amazing power is the ability to regenerate defective or injured tissue. Life is essentially indestructible, and if it is wounded, "Life can heal its wounds again."²⁸ Sin is the rending of life. Every sin is murder, a killing of the unity of life, or rather, an attempt to kill it.

Destruction of life is not the nullification of life but its diremption, and the destruction consists in its transformation into an enemy.²⁹

Using Macbeth, Banquo, and Banquo's ghost as an illustration, Hegel writes:

The trespasser intended to have to do with another's life, but he has only destroyed his own, for life is not different from life, since life dwells in the single Godhead. In his arrogance he has destroyed indeed, but only the friendliness of life; he has perverted it into an enemy.³⁰

Sin is an "attack" upon essential human nature. But essential human nature cannot be murdered. It turns upon man and accuses him of having separated himself from the unity of life (the wrath of God, Banquo's ghost). It convicts him of self-estrangement. Hegel calls this power of essential human nature "Fate."

When the trespasser feels the disruption of his own life (suffers punishment) or knows himself (in his bad conscience) as disrupted, then the working of his fate commences, and this feeling of a life disrupted must become a longing for what has been lost. The deficiency is recognized as a part of himself, as what was to have been in him and is not. This lack is not a not-being but is life known and felt as not-being. To have felt this fate as possible is to fear it; and this is a feeling quite different from the fear of punishment. The former is fear of separation, an awe of one's self; fear of punishment is fear of something alien, even if the law is known as one's own.³¹

²⁸Ibid., p. 230

²⁹Ibid., p. 229

³⁰Ibid., p. 229

³¹Ibid., pp. 230-231. Cf. Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death.

The authority here is more than intellectual. It is the essential structure of man as a complete, functioning being which is the measure of his life, the judge of his deeds, and the lure to re-integrate after disruption has taken place.

Fate has a more extended range than punishment has... Punishment exercises its domination only in so far as there is a consciousness of life at the point where a disunion has been reunified conceptually; but over the relations of life which have not been dissolved, over the sides of life which are given as vitally united...it exercises no power.³²

A bad conscience, as a consciousness of self in opposition to self, always presupposes an ideal over against a reality which fails to correspond to the ideal, and the ideal is in man, a consciousness of his whole nature.³³

Boldness and confidence of decision about fullness of life, about abundance of love, arise from the feeling of the man who bears in himself the whole of human nature.³⁴

The experience of guilt and forgiveness is fundamentally rooted in an awareness of the whole of human nature. The pivotal significance of Hegel's repeated insistence on "wholeness" is suggested by his summary of estrangement and reconciliation as these function in personal life.

Since it is from him (man himself) that the law and the right of fate first arise, a return is possible to the original situation, to wholeness. For the sinner is more than a sin existent, a trespass possessed of personality; he is a man, trespass and fate are in him. He can return to himself again, and, if he does so, then trespass and fate are under him.... In love, life has found life once again. Between sin and its forgiveness there is as little place for an alien thing as there is between sin and punishment. Life has severed itself from itself and united itself again.³⁵

³²Ibid., p. 233

³³Ibid., p. 241 (*italics mine*).

³⁴Ibid., p. 240 (*italics mine*)

³⁵Ibid., pp. 238-239

Up to this point estrangement has been treated as a wholly unfortunate phenomenon, something which should not be, something which robs life of fullness and meaning. But this passage portends nothing less than a revolution in Hegel's estimate of estrangement. For he is placing estrangement and reconciliation in the context of process. The spatial setting suggested by the terms separation and externalization has coalesced into the temporal setting of movement from stage to stage within the whole of an organic process. Within this process estrangement may function as a necessary element, as a factor which induces movement from stage to stage. In fact, if the total process includes both estrangement from original unity and return to unity, estrangement not only is necessary but good. Hegel goes so far as to say that moral self-estrangement is good, and the more the better.³⁶ He commends the person who avoids being frivolous with his life, who postpones reunion with himself until his longing for unity springs from the deepest recesses of the spirit. Sin is the price man pays for moral maturity. The only route from innocent childhood to mature manhood is by way of a continuous process of self-estrangement and self-reconciliation. This means that man's moral existence is tragic. Self-violation arouses the judgment of fate; it brings consequences which are not extinguished by forgiveness. They must be borne. Some aspects of life may be maimed permanently or even destroyed. But if the suffering

³⁶"Opposition is the possibility of reunification, and the extent to which in affliction life is felt as an opposite is also the extent of the possibility of resuming it again." (Ibid., p. 232.)

of estrangement is accepted with a courage born of self-affirmation and rooted in awareness of the indestructibility of Life, the reconciliation which follows is authentic, and man's life is re-shaped and re-integrated into a new and richer whole.

Using this picture of moral experience as a clue, Hegel begins looking for an analogous process in the realm of mind. He is fascinated by the experience of forgiveness and personal reintegration, and he is aware of the fact that awareness of this experience implies mental activity. How is the awareness of ultimate wholeness achieved? Certainly not by way of concepts, for to conceive of a man's life as pure life means trying to abstract from every action, from everything which the man was or will be. The resultant is merely the universal concept behind his specific actions; the concreteness of his life is lost.

Consciousness of pure life would be a consciousness of what the man is, and in it there is no differentiation and no developed or actualized multiplicity.³⁷

This is to say that just as love as a synthesizing power goes beyond the duality of reason and inclination, so the awareness of life must go beyond the duality of subject and object.

To this infinite field of lordship and bondage there can be opposed only the pure sensing of life, which has in itself its justification and its authority.³⁸

In attempting to describe this "pure sensing of life" Hegel leaves no doubt that it is a kind of mystical experience to which he is referring. For pure life is not only synonymous with essential human nature taken as a whole, but Hegel identifies it with the

³⁷Ibid., p. 254.

³⁸Ibid., p. 255.

divine and finally with being. The pure sensing of life is an awareness of being-itself, the experience of unio mystica.

The hill and the eye which sees it are object and subject, but between man and God, between spirit and spirit, there is no such cleft of objectivity and subjectivity; one is to the other an other only in that one recognizes the other; both are one.³⁹

The mystical experience is a self-authenticating awareness of the infinite indestructible unity of life beyond the self-world correlation and the subject-object duality which is based on it.

Since he accepts the presupposition that intelligible discourse is carried on via concepts, Hegel's problem again is how to say anything meaningful about this awareness of mystical identity.

Nowhere more than in the communication of the divine is it necessary for the recipient to grasp the communication with the depths of his own spirit. Nowhere is it less possible to learn, to assimilate passively, because everything expressed about the divine in the language of reflection is eo ipso contradictory; and the passive spiritless assimilation of such an expression not only leaves the deeper spirit empty but also distracts the intellect which assimilates it and for which it is a contradiction.⁴⁰

The connection between God and the world must be taken to be a living connection, and where such a connection is in question, ties between the related terms can be expressed only in mystical phraseology.⁴¹

Hegel concludes that just as the relationship between God and the world must be described mystically, so also the relationship between the self and its world in the self-world correlation must be described symbolically (imaginatively) rather than literally (conceptually). He proceeds to explore the implication of mystical

³⁹ Ibid., p. 265

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 256

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 259

ecstasy by meditating speculatively on the rich suggestiveness of Jesus' use of the symbols "son of God" and "son of man," and on the doctrine of the Trinity as adumbrated in the Johannine writings.

As we have noted before, Hegel holds that Jesus labored under a severe handicap because the Hebrew language and tradition were poor providers of symbols. But he believes that the phrases "son of God" and "son of man" must be accounted "happy expressions" and surmises that they were left by accident in the Jewish speech of Jesus' time. It is significant, says Hegel, that the relation of son to father is not a conceptual unity, it is not abstract like a harmony of disposition or a similarity of principles, etc. It is a living relation of living beings, a likeness of life. Father and son are simply modifications of the same life. They share the same essence--which is more than saying that they share the same predicate. In Jesus' teachings the Father represents undifferentiated life. The son represents differentiated life. As son of God Jesus participated in pure life, in the realm of simple unity. As son of man Jesus appeared in a particular shape, he participated in the actualized multiplicity of life. Jesus was both divine and human, both infinite and finite. He taught that every man participates essentially in the same double sonship which he demonstrated in his own life, that the infinite and the finite are not alien to one another, that the destiny of man is nothing less than God-manhood.

In every man there is light and life; he is the property of the light. He is not illumined by a light in the way in which a dark body is when it borrows a brightness not its own; on the contrary, his own inflammability

takes fire and he burns with a flame that is his own. ⁴²

This interpretation of Jesus' message leads Hegel to describe the relationship of intellect to the finite and the infinite in terms of a "holy mystery." He couches his description in terms of the son of God and son of man symbols, but its meaning is clear. As the son of God, that is, as the self which lives beyond the separation between universal and particular (infinite and finite), man does not judge, sunder, or divide; he does not hold to an opposition in its opposition. As the son of man, that is, as the self which lives as a restricted entity in a world of particulars, man has received authority and power to pass judgment: he defines and analyzes and evaluates the multifarious elements which go to make up his world.

Yet at the same time the son of man could not judge if he were not divine (the son of God); for only if he were can the criterion of judgment be in him, can the cleavage be possible. His power to bind and loose is grounded in the divine.⁴³

Thus the intellect itself is grounded in the mystery of the unity of the infinite and the finite, the divine and the human, the mystery of life beyond the self-world correlation and the subject-object duality.

Hegel continues his speculations on this mystery by meditating on the doctrine of the Trinity. He begins by relating the idea of the Logos to the self-world correlation. The Logos is with God the Father; both are one. Yet the Logos makes all

⁴²Ibid., p. 266.

⁴³Ibid., p. 263. Cf. pp. 262-263 for the entire argument.

things; it actualizes the infinite divisibility of the divine life. On the one hand, the world is not an emanation of the deity, not simply divine. On the other hand, the world is an emanation of the deity, for it is a part of the infinite partitioning of the divine life. Each single, restricted entity is opposed to life in the sense that it is external to the whole (something dead), yet in itself it is a whole, a life, and it belongs to the comprehensive unity of the divine life.

It is true of objects, of things lifeless, that the whole is other than the parts; in the living thing, on the other hand, the part of the whole is one and the same as the whole. If particular objects, as substances, are linked together while each of them yet retains its character as an individual (as numerically one), then their common characteristic, their unity, is only a concept, not an essence, not something being. Living things, however, are essences, even if they are separate, and their unity is still a unity of essence. What is a contradiction in the realm of the dead is not one in the realm of life.⁴⁴

Hegel draws the parallel. Just as there is a living relationship between the Father and the Logos, so there is a living relationship between the self as the ground of its world and the self as a participant in its world. Human life and all its relationships and events, which comprise what Hegel calls "the world" in the self-world correlation, are entirely "the work of the man who is self-developing." He actualizes the infinite divisibility of his self-consciousness, he becomes a self which "has" a world. Yet in the midst of multiplicity he remains at the deepest level a unified being which includes self and world, a being whose reality lies precisely in the correlation of self and world.

The key "person" of the Trinity, therefore, is the Spirit,

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 260-261. (my italics)

for the Spirit is the "life-giver," the unseen but unmistakably real dynamic power which binds the Logos and the Father together into a living whole. God is Life. God is Love. God is Spirit. And the mystery of the unity of the divine life, which means the mystery of the whole of reality (since God is being-itself), is identical with the mystery of the unity of the self-world correlation in the life of every man. Man also is life, love, spirit. Jesus was profoundly right, says Hegel, when he taught that the only sin which cannot be forgiven is the sin against the Holy Spirit. For the dynamics of life (love) requires affirmation of ultimate unity and punishes its denial.

He who sunders himself from God blasphemes nature itself, blasphemes the spirit in nature; his spirit has destroyed its own holiness, and he is therefore incapable of annulling his separation and reuniting himself with love, with holiness.⁴⁵

LIFE is trinitarian, and human nature is trinitarian. Every view of reality which limits itself to sheer unreconciled polarity--mind and body, idea and reality, reason and inclination, self and world, subject and object, God and man--constitutes blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

But it is equally true that every view of reality which concentrates on spirit alone--on love to the exclusion of mature fullness of life or on mystical identity to the exclusion of conceptual differentiation--is incomplete and inadequate. Just as the experience of moral reintegration (forgiveness experienced in love) is an ecstatic revelation which reconciles but does not extinguish reason and inclination, so also the experience of

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 273.

mystical identity must be superseded by a return to the self-world polarity in which self and world, subject and object, are separate and discrete. Hegel makes this point in writing about the significance of baptism.

No feeling is so homogeneous with the desire for the infinite, the longing to merge into the infinite, as the desire to immerse one's self in the sea. To plunge into it is to be confronted by an alien element which at once flows round us on every side and which is felt at every point of the body. We are taken away from the world and the world from us. We are nothing but felt water which touches us where we are, and we are only where we feel it. In the sea there is no gap, no restriction, no multiplicity, nothing specific. The feeling of it is the simplest, the least broken up. After immersion a man comes up into the air again, separates himself from the water, is at once free from it and yet it still drips from him everywhere. So soon as the water leaves him, the world around him takes on specific characteristics again, and comes back strengthened to the consciousness of multiplicity.⁴⁶

A parallel passage on the incompleteness of love reads as follows:

Morality cancels domination within the sphere of consciousness (that is, moral autonomy overcomes heteronomy); love cancels the barriers in the sphere of morality (that is, love undercuts the split between reason and inclination); but love itself is still incomplete in nature. In the moments of happy love there is no room for objectivity; yet every reflection annuls love, restores objectivity again, and with objectivity we are once more on the territory of restrictions.⁴⁷

Love may be called "the angel's sight of God," the experience of unconscious, undeveloped unity.

The deepest, holiest, sorrow of a beautiful soul, its most incomprehensible riddle, is that its nature has to be disrupted, its holiness sullied. Just as for the intellect the most incomprehensible thing is the divine

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 275.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 253.

and unity with God, so for the noble heart is alienation from God.⁴⁸

But the hard fact is that innocence must give way to guilt, that unconscious unity must give way to conscious disunity. And it is equally plain that if estrangement is defined as the emergence of intellect from the level of immediacy ("undetermined subjectivity") to the consciousness of self and world, then the reunification of the self cannot be understood in terms of a simple return to immediacy, to pure spirit. There must be a third stage which combines immediacy with mediacy, a consciously developed unity. Man cannot recapture the innocence of Adam; he must progress to the mature manhood of Christ.

The culmination of faith, the return to the Godhead whence man is born, closes the circle of man's development. Everything lives in the Godhead, every living thing is its child, but the child carries the unity, the connection, the concord with the entire harmony, undisturbed though undeveloped, in itself. It begins with faith in gods outside itself, with fear, until through its actions it has (isolated and) separated itself more and more; but then it returns through association to the original unity which now is developed, self-produced, and sensed as a unity. The child now knows God, i.e., the spirit of God is present in the child, issues from its restrictions, annuls the modification, and restores the whole. God, the Son, the Holy Spirit!⁴⁹

How is developed, self-produced unity sensed? What does Hegel mean by the associations through which man returns to unity? Once again Hegel's concern is with experience, with a consciousness or awareness of some kind. One thing is clear. Maturity is complex, and the experience of mature unity must be an awareness in which subjectivity and objectivity are consciously

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 269.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 273.

unified within the structure of the self-world correlation. This accounts for a curious shift in Hegel's use of the word love. He has introduced love as the synthesis of reason and inclination, as a sense of the wholeness of life beyond (or beneath) self and world. But now he is searching for an apprehension of completeness within the self-world correlation, and therefore love as an experience of mystical identity must be classed as purely subjective. It represents only one side of mature consciousness. The other side is some form of objectivity which supplies a medium for the "associations" which lead to a sense of complex unity. Hegel finds a clue to an experience within the finite self-world correlation which points to and participates in the infinite unity of life in the aesthetic (ecstatic) participation achieved by the Greeks, and he believes that a synthesis of Christian love and Greek participation may provide the answer to his question. He calls this synthesis religion.

Love is a divine spirit, but it still falls short of religion. To become religion, it must manifest itself in an objective form. A feeling, something subjective, it must be fused with the universal, with something represented in idea, and thereby acquire the form of a being to whom prayer is both possible and due. The need to unite subject with object, to unite feeling and feeling's demand for objects with the intellect, to unite them in something beautiful, in a god, by means of fancy, is the supreme need of the human spirit and the urge to religion.⁵⁰

Religious practice is the most holy, the most beautiful, of all things; it is our endeavor to unify the discords necessitated by our development and our attempt to exhibit the unification in the ideal as fully existent, as no longer opposed to reality, and thus to express and confirm it in a deed.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 289.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 206

What is the nature of this deed? It is an imaginative participation in objective forms of life, a type of participation which finds a further dimension in the very same objects which ordinary reflection can analyze exhaustively into separate and external elements. It is an experience in which these objective forms become media through which the essential unity of all things in LIFE becomes manifest.

An ideal of human nature is quite different from general concepts of man's vocation or of man's relation to God. The ideal does permit of particularization, of determination in detail, and therefore it demands appropriate religious actions, feelings, usages, demands an excess of these, a mass of excessiveness which in the lamplight of general concepts seems only ice and stone.⁵²

Imagination is the counterpart in consciousness of the union of subjectivity and objectivity in LIFE. It denies neither pole and yet it binds them together in conscious experience. It unites rather than separates; it participates rather than dominates.

Hegel contrasts the role of imagination in Greek religion with its restriction in Christianity by analyzing the implications of the Lord's Supper. Here the act of eating bread and drinking wine establishes a mystical bond between objects and persons, between something objective and something subjective. The spirit of Jesus, in which his disciples are one, has become a present object, a reality for external feeling. Yet the love made objective, this subjective element become a thing, reverts back once more to its nature, becomes subjective in the eating. And this is the flaw which keeps the celebration of the Lord's Supper from being truly religious.

⁵²Ibid., p. 170.

What prevents the action from becoming a religious one is just the fact that objectivity is totally annulled... There is nothing for imagination (in which intellect and feeling are both present and yet cancelled) to do; here it cannot provide any image in which the seeing and feeling would be unified.⁵³

On the other hand, in Greek religion the circle of experience moves from the objective through imagination to the subjective and back to the objective again. In such a way the objectivity and subjectivity are present simultaneously.

When lovers sacrifice before the altar of the goddess of love and the prayerful breath of their emotion fans their emotion to a white-hot flame, the goddess herself has entered their hearts, yet the marble statue remains standing in front of them.⁵⁴

Subjective content and objective form are fused in the experience Hegel calls religious. The form is necessary in order that its shape may induce imaginative awareness of the divine. The content is necessary in order that the divine may be experienced and in order that the image (created through cultural activity) may fulfil its highest function.

* * * * *

To summarize: what Hegel seems to be saying in this essay is that Life must be approached in terms of process (the Trinity), of culture (the Incarnation), and of rationality (the Logos) if it is to be comprehended not only as estranged but also as reconciled. The critical point in his analysis is the relation of religion (culture) to thought. He diagnoses the failure of Christianity to achieve full reconciliation as a case of arrested

⁵³Ibid., pp. 251-252

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 251

development. The perennial problem of the Church--and particularly of the Protestant churches--is the relationship of its truth to culture. Christianity never has abandoned its otherworldliness completely enough to establish an unequivocal relevance to contemporary life. Hegel brings "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate" to a close with these words:

Between these extremes of the multiple or diminished consciousness of friendship, hate, or indifference toward the world, between these extremes which occur within the opposition between God and the world, between the divine and life, the Christian church has oscillated to and fro, but it is contrary to its essential character to find peace in a nonpersonal living beauty. And it is its fate that church and state, worship and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action, can never dissolve into one.⁵⁵

The reconciliation of all realms of life must proceed by way of an affirmation of culture, for culture is the medium through which man exercises and experiences both freedom and unity.⁵⁶ This is a reaffirmation of the Hellenic ideal. But Hegel is not satisfied. Even if the process of Life becomes incarnate in culture and is experienced consciously in religion (by way of imagination), the full scope of rationality cannot be said to have been realized. Imagination is incomplete, just as love is incomplete.

Of course, as soon as intellectual concepts are opposed to imagery and taken as dominant, every image must be set aside as only play, as a by-product of the imagination and without truth; and, instead of the life of the image, nothing remains but objects.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 301

⁵⁶ Ibid., cf. pp. 279-280

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 261

European intellectualism...extracts all spirit from the contents of consciousness and crystallizes the latter into absolute objectivities, into realities downright opposed to spirit.⁵⁸

Imagination can only say "as if." It cannot present truth in rationally verifiable form. His own experience has convinced Hegel that he has encountered not an "as if" but the truth. It should be possible to demonstrate the insights gained through religious experience in terms of rigorous thought.

What is religious, then, is the pleroma, the fulfillment of love; it is reflection and love united, bound together in thought.⁵⁹

Obviously Hegel is searching for a form of thought which can follow the circle of experience through its several stages, a form of thought which moves, which in the course of its progress can unite elements that from the standpoint of ordinary logic are "separate and external" to one another and even contradictory. His speculations on the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Logos, as well as his intense interest in the mysterious circle of experience adumbrated in the Christian sacraments, have shown us that Hegel's most important clue is the realization that the very process of Life includes both estrangement and reconciliation, and that the movement from one to the other reveals the essential unity of Life. But he is at this time unable to discover a way of thinking which complements the intellect's power to separate with an equal power to reunite the polar opposites which constitute man's apprehension of himself and his world.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 300

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 253 (my italics)

CHAPTER THREE

The years between 1800 and 1803 mark the metamorphosis of Hegel from a theologian into a logician. In his case there is a deep meaning in the fact that both of these disciplines have "logos" in their names. For it is precisely Hegel's theological concerns which lead him to logic, while on the other hand, his logic is not fully understood unless it is seen to be a rigorous conceptual systematization of theological insight and convictions.¹ In his introduction to the first volume of the collected works of Hegel which he edited, Lasson makes this point so succinctly that his statement is worth quoting:

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the foundation for Hegel's entire thought-world is to be found in religion and more specifically in the Christian idea of God. This idea had shaped his mental/spiritual life before he began to philosophize systematically, and to vindicate it, to maintain it, was

¹Marcuse's explanation of Hegel's turn toward philosophy is not convincing. He holds that the shift is rooted in the insight "that the revealed truth of the Gospel could not fit in with the expanding social and political realities of the world, for the Gospel appealed essentially to the individual as an individual detached from his social and political nexus; its essential aim was to save the individual and not society or the state." (Reason and Revolution, op. cit. p. 35) So far we can agree. This dissatisfaction with Christianity has been described in detail as not only directed against individualism but also against Protestant cultural sterility. But we cannot agree when Marcuse goes on to say that this criticism leads Hegel to conclude: "It is therefore not religion that could solve the problem, or theology that could set forth the principles to restore freedom and unity. As a result, Hegel's interest shifted from theological to philosophical questions and concepts." (Ibid.) This is to disregard the fruitful tension in Hegel's thought between Christianity and Hellenism, between theology and philosophy. Repudiation of a certain version of Christianity does not mean repudiation of religion, nor does concentration on philosophy mean religion is left behind. In fact, the shift of context and the substitution of an entirely new vocabulary can be interpreted as an effort to express adequately what Hegel believes to be true religion---the Truth.

the drive which would not let him rest until he had developed his system as the doctrine of Absolute Spirit and its self-realization. It would be foolish to attempt to exclude this starting-point from his philosophy and to look upon it as a private idiosyncrasy of Hegel's inner life which can or must be disregarded if one wishes to judge his system scientifically. For on the contrary, the fact that Hegel was rooted personally in the heart of a religious culture in which rational self-consciousness had raised itself to the knowledge of the God who is Spirit and as Absolute Spirit is the ground and life of all Being--this fact presented him with the task which for the first time gives philosophy its due, the task of reconciling subjective thought with objectivity and of attaining the comprehension of its own spiritual character. Thus for Hegel philosophy is called to know God, and he welcomes the point to which philosophy has advanced in his day as the turning-point from which the human spirit will once again advance to consciousness of its divinity. His whole philosophy is for him a theodicy, a justification of the idea of God.²

Having made this point, let us turn directly to the first essays with which Hegel entered the philosophical arena. The two which are most interesting for the present study are "Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems," and "Glauben und Wissen."

Fichte's prime interest is the self and the focus of his investigations is the nature and implications of self-consciousness. Hegel holds this concern of Fichte's in high regard. He agrees that process is the nature of reality (formerly called Life and now called the Absolute), and that self-consciousness gives man the experience of process. The self is a dynamic cycle of self-estrangement and self-reconciliation. He also agrees that the self is superior to its world, ("the world is entirely the work of the man who is self-developing"), that the Absolute Ego as subject encompasses both the empirical ego and nature. In other words, both men see that the principle of subjectivity represents the synthesis of itself and objectivity. But the

²Hegel, Sämtliche Werke (Leipzig, 1928), I, xv. ed. Georg Lasson.

difficulty, so far as Hegel is concerned, is that this Absolute Ego never comes full circle, it never achieves real reconciliation. In fact, Fichte cannot allow complete unity, for according to his analysis this very achievement would destroy the finite ego, the self which can know itself to be a self only as it struggles against the non-ego (the world). If the finite ego were to overcome estrangement definitively, if it were to become Absolute Ego, it could not know it because consciousness would have disappeared. Therefore the Absolute Ego (God) must remain an unrealized ideal, a goal never attained, an object of faith rather than of knowledge. The self as process implies that God and man remain separated eternally. This conclusion Hegel is unwilling to accept, and therefore he welcomes Schelling's criticism of Fichte and his demand that an ultimate unity be recognized.

Schelling's prime interest is the "something" which is prior to both self and world, subject and object, and which produces both. For him nature (the world) is just as important as man (the self). By claiming that nature is merely a non-ego created by the ego as a resistance against which the ego can develop and know itself, Fichte has reduced nature to negative significance and has made it completely passive. This interpretation may be true to certain aspects of experience, but it ignores others which cannot be evaded. Man experiences nature as independent as well as dependent, as active as well as as passive. Nature confronts man as a power, as itself a complicated and dynamic structure of processes. Fichte may say that to be a thing must be experienced. But it is just as accurate to say that in order to be experienced a thing must be. Therefore experience

would seem to involve a reciprocal relationship between subject and object, with neither one reducible to the other. Unity is to be sought in neither one but rather in the source of both. He calls this common ground, of which spirit and nature, the conscious and the unconscious, subject and object are manifestations, the Absolute. This Absolute is infinite and eternal Reason, the only reality. Outside of it there is nothing, and inside it ego and non-ego, self and world, are identical.

Schelling's Absolute is not Hegel's Life. It is not a process. It is an equilibrium in which there is no movement. Life begins when the equilibrium is upset. Whereupon nature comes into being, proceeds in evolutionary cycles from one level of complexity to another, and eventually culminates in human minds which are able to contemplate the entire process and to intuit the ground of Absolute Reason. As he sums up his theory of identity:

This identity . . . is not what is produced but what is original, and it is produced only because it is. It is therefore already in everything which is. The power which flows forth in the mass of nature is essentially the same as that represented in the mental world, except that in the former it has to combat the preponderance of the real, as in the latter the preponderance of the ideal. But even this antithesis, which is not an antithesis according to its essence but according to mere potency, appears as antithesis only to him who is outside the indifference and glimpses the absolute identity itself not as the original

^{one} glimpses the absolute identity itself not as the original
^{one} Schelling's emphasis on the "is," is reminiscent of Hegel's own insistence that Life is an "is" rather than an "ought." But this

³Schelling, Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie, Collected Works, I, p. 136; quoted by Bolman in introduction to his translation of The Ages of the World, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p. 16.

picture of an "is" in which all differences are absorbed and in which the struggle between spirit and nature, real and ideal, is finally an illusion, seems to Hegel to be much too harmonious and too illusory. His answer in the introduction to his essay on Fichte and Schelling is very blunt:

Diremption is one of the factors of Life, which forms itself by eternally disrupting itself; totality in its supreme vitality is possible only through a restoration which follows supreme separation.⁴

He goes on to state his conviction that philosophy is called to a serious task which cannot be discharged by aesthetic contemplation of the world as though it were unified, when in fact it is being torn apart.

The need for philosophy arises when the unifying power has disappeared from the life of men, when the contradictions have lost their living interrelation and interdependence and have assumed an independent form.⁵

Furthermore, Hegel is critical of the intuition by which Schelling claims that he becomes aware of the Absolute, an intuition which he calls "intellectual," but which is not amenable to solid philosophical reflection. Basically it is an appeal to a kind of poetic experience, an esoteric vision--hardly a fruitful starting-point for intellectual and social reconstruction. Nevertheless, this claim defines the problem of knowledge for Hegel in the clearest terms. Is there a way of combining intuition (which unites) with reflection (which divides)? Can Fichte and Schelling be offering the materials for a Hegelian answer? Hegel soon reveals

⁴Sämtliche Werke, op. cit., p. 14 (following Kroner) translations in this section are by the present writer except when otherwise noted.

⁵Ibid., p. 14 (following Marcuse)

that his essay is designed to announce the discovery that the intellect itself possesses a power which can unite union and non-union, a power which can grasp and comprehend Life. It is the precise counterpart of the power of love described in the Early Theological Writings, which just at the moment of greatest estrangement heals the wound of guilt by accepting it. Hegel calls it reason, and introduces it as a synthesizing activity operative in and through conceptual oppositions and logical contradictions. "What is a contradiction in the realm of the dead is not one in the realm of life." In the realm of thought, as in the sphere of morals, the path leads through death to life, through estrangement to reconciliation.

Hegel describes what he means by reason by contrasting it with understanding. Understanding is defined as the type of thinking which is characteristic of ordinary common sense and which appears in refined form in empirical science. Its operations may be called "isolated reflection," which is the same thing as the intellectual conceptualization we have encountered earlier. The understanding conceives the world to be a collection of finite entities, separate and external to one another. Isolated reflection analyzes this world into numberless polarities.⁶ Reason, on

⁶"The culture of different times stated such polar opposites, which are to be regarded as products of reason and as absolute, in various forms, and the understanding grappled with them. The antitheses which formerly were important under the form of mind and matter, soul and body, faith and reason, freedom and necessity, etc., which were significant in many other ways in more restricted areas and which linked with each other all kinds of human interests, have developed during the progress of culture (under the form of an antithesis between reason and sense experience, intelligence and nature) into the universal concept of an antithesis between absolute subjectivity and absolute objectivity." Ibid., p. 13)

the other hand, is motivated by the need for a restoration of unity.

In the struggle between the understanding and reason power can be attributed to understanding only insofar as reason resigns itself to defeat. The success of the struggle, therefore, depends on reason itself and on the genuineness of the need for a restoration of the original totality from which reason has separated itself in its development.⁷

The first step toward restoring the totality is to undermine the stability of the estranged world of isolated things and fixed relations which the understanding takes to be the real world. The self-sufficient finitude of the everyday world is not the last word that can be said about reality. In the first instance this means a demonstration that

the relative identities of common sense which in their restricted form--just as they appear--lay claim to absoluteness, become non-essential (contingent) for philosophical reflection.⁸

This demonstration is carried out by what Hegel calls "speculative thinking," a type of thought which undertakes

to annul the opposition between stabilized subjectivity and objectivity and to conceive of the developed existence of the intellectual and material world as a process of becoming, and its being as a product and a producing.⁹

In other words, it conceives the world of seemingly fixed and stable entities to be through and through process-becoming. In itself every single entity is accidental, unreal insofar as it is partial. This is the meaning of the fact that the understanding always ends in contradictions.

⁷Ibid., p. 16.

⁸Ibid., p. 22.

⁹Ibid., p. 14.

If the understanding defines the infinite and the finite in such a way that both of them at the same time should remain in existence and still be opposed to one another, it destroys itself, because to contrast the finite and infinite means that insofar as one of them is posited the other is negated. The fact that reason recognizes this indicates that it has cancelled the understanding itself. What the understanding posits appears to reason as though it were not posited; and the understanding's products appear to it to be negations.

Insofar as it belongs to one of the contradictory and relative totalities, the restricted is either determined or free; insofar as it belongs to the synthesis of both sides, its restrictedness is overcome: it is at the same time free and determined, conscious and unconscious. This conscious identity of the finite and the infinite, the unification of both worlds--sense and intellect, necessity and freedom--in consciousness, is Knowledge. Both reflection as a finite ability and the infinite which is opposed to it are synthesized in Reason, whose infinity embodies the finite.¹⁰

The mutually exclusive polarities with which understanding culminates themselves contain reason implicitly, for awareness of their opposition includes awareness of their mutuality (their relativity), and this implies a knowledge of their unity which transcends the awareness of their disunity.

Having pointed out that the self-destruction of isolated reflection opens the way for speculative thinking, Hegel sketches the method by which philosophy constructs unity. It operates by means of a process of thought which comprehends the process of becoming. It dissolves the static either/or of understanding into a dynamic both/and by transforming seemingly isolated entities into "moments" of a process. Their opposition is the ongoing rhythm of the whole to which they belong, and their real nature is seen to lie in the relationship to the whole and in their contribution to its "life." This is to say, therefore,

¹⁰Ibid., p. 18-19.

that the only way philosophy can know anything is by knowing everything, by comprehending the entire world-process in which all partial processes find their place. This is what Hegel now calls the Absolute (instead of Life).

Only insofar as it is related to the Absolute is reflection reason and its deed knowledge. Yet through this relationship its work disappears, and only the relationship remains and is the sole reality for knowledge. Therefore, there is no other truth of isolated reflection or of pure thinking than that of its destruction. But the Absolute, because in philosophizing it is produced for consciousness by reflection, becomes in this way an objective totality, a corpus of knowledge, an organization of apprehensions. In this organization every part is at the same time the whole, for it exists as a relation to the Absolute. As a part, which has other parts external to it, it is a restricted entity and depends on the others for its existence. Isolated in its limitedness, it is defective; it has meaning and importance only through its participation in the whole. Therefore one cannot speak of single notions in themselves, single concepts, as knowledge. There can be a host of separate bits of empirical information. As knowledge of experience they demonstrate their justification in experience, that is, in the identity of ideas and beings, of subject and object. Therefore they do not represent scientific knowledge: first, because they have gained this justification in a merely restricted, relative identity; and second, because they neither have legitimized themselves as necessary parts of a consciously organized corpus of cognitions, nor has the absolute identity, the relationship which these parts have to the Absolute, become known through speculation.¹¹

The similarity between this passage and those in the Early Theological Writings which deal with Life and with the relation of part to whole in a biological organism and of part to part in the relation of son to father is obvious and striking. It is a good indication of the degree of continuity which runs through Hegel's thought despite changes in terminology. Hegel believes that at last he has discovered a "consciousness equal

¹¹Ibid., p. 20-21.

to Life." This knowledge is a totality (as Life is a whole), implicitly in common sense, contradicted by isolated reflection, and now to be reconstructed by speculative thinking (Reason). Therefore the form philosophy must assume is that of a system.

As a totality of knowledge produced through reflection, philosophy becomes a system, an all-embracing organization of (dialectical) concepts, whose supreme law is not the understanding but reason.¹²

Hegel does not elaborate his constructive method in detail. In this essay his main interest is to show how the estrangement produced by the intellect as understanding leads logically to the annihilation of this estrangement by the intellect as reason (negation of the negation). He emphasizes how "natural" estrangement seems to most people. It is so taken for granted that when reason begins its reconciling work it seems instead to be destroying reality itself and to be reducing everything to nothingness. Again and again he speaks of the negative function of reason, its "prophetic" power of casting down from the pedestal of security the apparently solid and independent entities of the estranged world of the understanding.

Speculation demands in its highest synthesis of consciousness and unconsciousness also the annihilation of the reflective consciousness itself, and reason thereupon submerges its reflecting on absolute identity and its knowledge and finally also itself in its own abyss. This night of mere reflection and calculating understanding is the noon of life, and in it both (life and reflection) can meet.¹³

But he also insists on the fact that in spite of its surface

¹²Ibid., p. 25.

¹³Ibid., p. 25; last sentence follows Kroner.

destructiveness, reason simply reveals explicitly the ultimate unity of all things which the common man has known all along without knowing that he knows it. It remains for him "ein Innres, ein Gefühl, ein Unerkanntes und ein Unausgesprochenes."¹⁴

Speculation recognizes as intelligible reality only the existence of knowledge in its totality; for it all certainly depends for its reality and truth on a conscious relationship to the Absolute. Therefore it is aware of the Absolute which lies at the root of the utterances of common sense. . . . Speculation understands common sense very well, while common sense cannot understand what speculation is doing.¹⁵

The conclusion which Hegel has reached is summarized by him in terms of logic:

If one reflects solely on the formal element in speculation and clings to the synthesis of knowledge in a purely analytic form, then the antinomy, the self-cancelling contradiction, is the highest formal expression of knowledge and of truth.¹⁶

This strictly logical statement of his discovery of the power of Reason to build on self-negating contradictions seems far removed from any theological concern, except that the Reason which knows the Absolute obviously parallels the Spirit which knows Life.

In "Glaube und Wissen" Hegel deals more directly with the relation of philosophy to religion. His starting-point is the conviction that the traditionally theological problem of faith and knowledge is being discussed more fruitfully in his own day by philosophers.¹⁷ The spirit of the age is rooted in

¹⁴Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 29 (following Kroner)

¹⁷Modern culture has transcended the old conflict between

the Reformation, which lifted subjectivity--the private inner experience of the individual person--into central importance as the criterion of reality and truth.¹⁸ Most of the essay is devoted to an analysis of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte, whose thought Hegel considers to be the clearest expression of this spirit. The symbol of complete interiorization is Kant's "ding an sich," which is a denial that things can be known as they are in themselves. Knowledge is strictly limited. Man knows the finite empirical world of phenomena, but he does not know the non-empirical infinite--the highest idea, the truth, the absolute, God. Knowledge and faith, human intellect and divine revelation, the temporal and the eternal, the finite and the infinite must be approached with an either/or rather than a both/and. They oppose and exclude one another.

To the extent to which the religious longing for eternal joy and blessedness remains powerful, otherworldly tendencies are bound to develop out of such a dualistic view. As we have seen earlier, Hegel is acutely aware of these tendencies in Protestant culture, and for this reason he welcomes the Enlight-

faith and reason, philosophy and positive religion, in such a way as to change the significance of the opposition between belief and knowledge. In our time this is an opposition within philosophy itself." (Ibid., p. 223)

¹⁸"The great form of the world-spirit . . . is the principle of the North, and, regarded religiously, the principle of Protestantism, the subjectivity in which beauty and truth are exhibited in feelings and sentiments, in love and understanding. Religion builds its temples and altars in the heart of the individual; with sighs and prayers it seeks the God whom it dare not look at directly because of the ever-present danger of the understanding, which would recognize whatever was seen as a thing, which would not see the forest because of the trees!" (Ibid., p. 225)

enment which was the historical counter-stroke against the devaluation of earthly affairs. This movement has made the non-temporal a matter of superstition and has set up happiness as the goal of all human activity, happiness here and now. But this reaction against otherworldliness itself has been one-sided and therefore unsatisfactory.

The basic character of Eudaemonism and the Enlightenment has transformed the beautiful subjectivity of Protestantism into an empirical subjectivity, and has changed the poetry of its grief--which scorns reconciliation with empirical existence--into the prose of a satisfaction with this finite world, into an easy conscience.¹⁹

If happiness is a matter of ultimate concern, it has a dimension of depth which goes beyond this completely eudaemonistic view,

for when happiness is conceived of as Idea, it ceases to be something empirical and accidental, something sensuous. . . . Every philosophy is nothing but the supreme felicity construed as Idea. Since the highest happiness becomes known through reason, the distinction between the two falls away; the concept and the infinity which govern the act and the reality and finiteness which govern the enjoyment are taken into each other.²⁰

The Enlightenment is shallow because its ruling principle is that "the finite, in and for itself and absolutely, is the sole reality."²¹ And what is most significant is that Hegel is able to discern that the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte actually are controlled by this principle in spite of their attempts to go beyond it in being true to the Protestant principle of subjectivity.

¹⁹Ibid., pp.228-229.

²⁰Ibid., p. 227.

²¹Ibid., p. 228.

Just as diametrically as these philosophies set themselves against Eudaemonism, so little have they departed from it. Plainly it is their sole explicit tendency and their announced principle to lift themselves above the subjective and the empirical, and to vindicate the absoluteness and independence of reason from common material existence. But since this reason simply moves against the empirical, these philosophies have remained directly in its sphere.²²

The final implication of this pervasive modern outlook dominated by the empirical definition of reality is that life and thought are completely secular. Reason must bow before sense experience and philosophy must confine its investigations to man alone.

Since the firm standpoint which the all-powerful spirit of the age and its culture have fixed for philosophy is a reason affected by sense experience, the subject-matter with which such philosophy can deal is not knowledge of God but rather knowledge of man. Man and humanity are its absolute standpoint, namely as a fixed and insurmountable finitude of reason. Humanity is not a reflected splendor of eternal beauty, nor is it a spiritual focus of the universe, but it is an absolute finite empiricism, which, however, still possesses a power of faith by which it can daub itself here and there with alien super-sensuous colors.²³

If this is true, then to all intents and purposes God is dead so far as modern thought is concerned. Hegel says as much. But he sees this development as a strategic moment in the history of thought. It is a situation parallel to that of acute consciousness of guilt experienced as fate, and to that of the experience of finitude made explicit in logical contradictions-- a situation of utter estrangement which opens the possibility of a new synthesis.

²²Ibid., p. 231.

²³Ibid., p. 233.

The highest negative abstraction is the ego, just as the highest positive abstraction is the thing. Both alike are themselves merely negations of one another. Pure being like pure thought--an absolute thing and an absolute ego--are equally the absolutization of something relative and finite.²⁴

Therefore, says Hegel, the time for philosophical reconstruction has come. Since absolute disunity has been achieved, the resurrection of unity is not only necessary but possible.

The pure notion, or infinity as the abyss of nothingness into which everything falls, must explain the infinite grief which formerly existed historically only as a feeling on which the religion of our time is based--the feeling: God is dead. This feeling must be grasped purely as a moment, but certainly not as more than a moment, of the highest Idea. In this way the notion must give philosophical existence to what perhaps was either a moral prescription or a sacrifice of empirical reality or the concept of a formal abstraction. It must restore to philosophy the idea of absolute freedom, and in this way the infinite grief--the speculative Good Friday, which formerly was an historical event and which now philosophy must bring back in its entire truth and in the cruelty of its godforsakenness. For only out of this cruelty can the supreme totality arise in all its seriousness and out of its deepest ground into the all-encompassing joyous freedom of its true form; and it not only can but it must rise into this true form.²⁵

True knowledge is possible. Philosophy will vindicate the inchoate experience of religious faith that all things are one in God. But it must bring religion to complete maturity by achieving what faith never can accomplish; it must make truth explicit. In a fragment probably written about the same time as "Glauben und Wissen" but never published, Hegel says quite directly that philosophy must show itself to be the true heir of the Reformation and the Enlightenment by establishing

²⁴Ibid., p. 235.

²⁵Ibid., p. 345-346.

a new religion in which the infinite grief and the whole gravity of its discord is acknowledged, but is at the same time serenely and purely dissolved...To embrace the whole energy of the suffering and discord that has controlled the world and all forms of its culture for some thousand years, and also to rise above it--this can be done by philosophy alone.²⁶

How is philosophy to accomplish this task? By making God its central concern, its beginning and its end.

(Philosophy) predicates of God not only being but also thought, that is, selfhood, and knows him to be the absolute identity of both; it asserts that there is nothing in addition to God and therefore that God cannot be understood as a being which is determined by some other being outside itself, that is, as though there could be any other existence; but outside God no existence at all and nothing.²⁷

God is Life, the Whole, the Absolute--and most important for knowledge--Geist. This essay carries forward the insight already adumbrated in the Early Theological Writings that the human spirit and the divine Spirit are inseparably united. Now, however, Geist has been given the explicit connotation of mind. In mind man and God are one; man can think God's thought after him because God thinks in man. Thought is God's being in man. Or to say it another way, God dwells in the human mind as the prius of all thought. In his earlier essays Hegel has described God as trinitarian process and the self as a trinitarian process. The last step is taken in the present essay. Mind is also trinitarian. For

²⁶Quoted by Kroner in his introduction to the Early Theological Writings, op. cit., p. 38

²⁷Erste Druckschriften, op. cit., p. 327. A parallel passage appears in the essay on Fichte and Schelling: "God has been placed long enough beside other finite entities, or even at the very end as a postulate which takes off from an absolute finitude; at the present time the next major concern of philosophy is to place God once again at the starting-point of philosophy." (Ibid., p. 149)

the first time Hegel makes the claim that Kant's triad of subject-object-synthesis is the true form of thought.²⁸ When understood correctly (as Kant did not, according to Hegel) thought is a dynamic unity of opposites, a process of estrangement and reconciliation. Thought is dialectical. The movement of thought and the movement of reality (being) are an identical movement. Reality is dialectical movement, and thought simply is the consciousness and awareness of it.²⁹

²⁸Cf. Ibid., pp. 240-247.

²⁹It should be emphasized that Hegel's keen social concern shines through the logical constructions in these essays. Marcuse, with his Marxist interest, lays great stress on this point. Hegel notes that the antagonisms of isolated reflection express real antagonisms. Such thinking is the mental counterpart of a social and political world estranged from the true wants and needs of men. He also makes it clear that individualism is no answer to man's problems; reason is social and freedom is social. The solution of the dilemma of estrangement involves not merely philosophical reconciliation but also the resolution of social and political conflicts, and in this task society as a whole (the nation) must take the lead with the individual accepting his responsible role. Hegel's political pamphlets of this period substantiate the importance which this emphasis had in his over-all outlook. He deals with concrete problems in terms of the newly-discovered dialectical method. Finally, we must mention the System of Morality, also written about this time, in which Hegel analyzes cultural forms of estrangement in terms reminiscent of the Early Theological Writings, but this time not as symbolized by Graeco-Roman disintegration but as operative in the contemporary world. He places special emphasis on the dehumanization caused by modern industrialism, foreshadowing in a striking way many sections of Marx's early philosophical writings which were the foundation of Das Kapital.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Phenomenology of Mind, published in 1807, is Hegel's first major philosophical work, his initial attempt to introduce the public to his reconstruction of philosophy as the queen of the sciences. It is a fascinating and difficult book, and this for many reasons. One of them is that although Hegel does not present his philosophy in systematic form, but rather leads up to it, the system is presupposed in what he says. Another is that the entire work combines a rigid technical analysis of problems with a free use of literary imagination and historical interpretation. The dialectical movement of thought described in the preceding chapter is combined with the movement of man's historical existence, and the rhythm of estrangement and reconciliation in the one is brought into such close identification with the same rhythm in the other that logic can illustrate history and history logic. More than that. History is described as a series of cumulative stages which do not merely serve as the bearers of truth, but which actually bring truth to the fulfillment of its potentialities. The question of the relationship of thought to being is translated into the much more concrete question of the relationship of philosophy to history. Thus Hegel can say on the one hand:

To help bring philosophy nearer to the form of science--that goal where it can lay aside the name of love of knowledge and be actual knowledge--that is what I have set before me.¹

¹Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. John Baillie. 2nd ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), p. 70.

And on the other hand, he can describe how he proposes to accomplish this purpose in words like these:

To show that the time process does raise philosophy to the level of scientific system would be the only true justification of the attempts which aim at proving that philosophy must assume this character; because the temporal process would thus bring out and lay bare the necessity of it, nay, more, would at the same time be carrying out that very aim itself.²

This emphasis on verification and necessity--that philosophy is systematic, coherent, comprehensive, demonstrable, and that history inevitably is bringing philosophy to the goal of certainty--is very significant. One cannot help wondering whether behind this absolutistic drive there may not be an acute feeling of uncertainty and of insecurity. Hegel does not seem to have any conscious awareness of such feelings in himself. The struggle reflected in the Early Theological Writings ended in a triumphant experience of reconciliation. But it is clear that he sees anxiety and insecurity all around him, both in modern competitive society and in the philosophies which he considers the most highly developed expression of the culture of this society. In his Preface to the Phenomenology he sketches the present situation and diagnoses its need. The outstanding characteristic of the age, he says, is the loss of "the sense of the solidity and substantiality of existence."³ The mind has passed beyond the state of immediacy of belief, beyond the satisfaction and security arising from the assurance

²Ibid., p. 70.

³Ibid., p. 72.

which man in former centuries possessed of being reconciled with ultimate reality and with its all-pervading presence, within himself as well as in the outside world. There is a deep awareness of finitude, of transitoriness. So far all efforts to regain a sense of security and of at-homeness have failed. The greatest enemy is the quantitative-mathematical definition of reality and of knowledge, the Newtonian world-view which looks at the universe as though it were a vast mechanism. Even the Critical Philosophy (Kant and Fichte) has made the fatal mistake of accepting the empirical presupposition that all knowledge is finite and discursive; in doing so it has cooperated in cutting reality into innumerable pieces, has analyzed it, labelled it, and left no room in it for man--man, that is, as an integrated being who "has" an integrated world. The most vociferous opponent of this approach to knowledge is Romanticism (Schelling and Jacobi), but unfortunately it has abandoned orderly ways of thought and has sought

to run together what thought has divided asunder, suppress the notion with its distinctions, and restore the feeling of existence. What it wants from philosophy is not so much insight as edification . . . not the notion, but ecstasy, not the march of cold necessity in the subject-matter, but ferment and enthusiasm.⁴

⁴Ibid., p. 72. This passage gives a vignette of the change in Hegel's outlook since he found in "love" the secret of life, in the "feeling for the whole" the reality of reconciliation. His scorn of emotion and his passion for clarity and certainty culminate in this sarcastic statement which follows closely after the sentences quoted above. "When such minds commit themselves to the unrestrained ferment of sheer emotion, they think that by putting a veil over self-consciousness and surrendering all understanding they are thus God's beloved ones to whom He gives His wisdom in sleep. This is the reason, too, that in point of fact what they do conceive and bring forth is dreams." (Ibid., pp. 74-75)

Neither approach meets the need of the hour. The one is broad but empty, the other is deep but empty.⁵ In short, historical existence has outgrown the methods by which men have attempted to comprehend it. "The times are out of joint." But Hegel does not say with Hamlet: "O cursed spite, that ever I was sent to set them right." On the contrary, he is the prophet of the new age.

It is not difficult to see that our epoch is a birth-time, and a period of transition. The spirit of man . . . is indeed never at rest, but carried along the stream of progress ever onward.⁶

There is an air of apocalyptic tension in the present crisis, however, which makes it different from every previous

⁵"Just as there is a breadth which is emptiness, there is a depth which is empty too: as we may have an extension of substance which overflows into finite multiplicity without the power of keeping the manifold together, in the same way we may have an insubstantial intensity which, keeping itself in as mere force without actual expression, is no better than superficiality." (Ibid., p. 74)

⁶Ibid., p. 75. Hegel's confidence in ultimate reconciliation appears here in the familiar form of faith in progress. Theologically this is implicit already in his experience of Life and his "pantheism of Love." Certainly it is rooted in the Christian doctrine of providence. Marcuse, however, insists that this faith appears in a new form in the Phenomenology. "The change in Hegel's point of view becomes manifest in the unshakable certainty with which he determines the end of the process (of the growth of knowledge). The mind, despite misery and deterioration will attain its goal, or, rather, has attained it." (Op. cit., p. 93) His point is that Hegel is so sure of a "happy ending" that he has become less critical of estrangement, particularly of social forms of estrangement. Marcuse believes that the cutting edge of Hegel's social criticism has been blunted, and his point seems to be well taken. However, the strictness with which Hegel applies his dialectical method must not be forgotten. Reconciliation is "in spite of", not a simple matter. Optimism always is a victory over despair, although very often it seems as though Hegel is so confident that he feels no threat.

"time of troubles." This is not going to be just another new age. For the stage of human development about to be inaugurated brings with it--at least in principle and gradually in fact--the completion of history. It is to be the age of the Spirit made famous by Joachim of Floris.⁷ Hegel believes both that philosophy will usher in this period in which human potentialities will reach full flower, and that philosophy itself will be the full flowering of human potentialities. The Phenomenology is the story of the pilgrimage by which the human spirit through the many centuries of recorded history has climbed up the ladder of knowledge to the threshold of the promised land of Truth.

This exposition . . . may be taken as the pathway of the natural consciousness which is pressing forward to true knowledge. Or it can be regarded as the path of the soul, which is traversing the series of its own forms of embodiment, like stages appointed for it by its own nature, that it may possess the clearness of spiritual life when, through the complete experience of its own self, it arrives at the knowledge of what it is in itself.⁸

The conviction that he is prepared to lead mankind over the threshold and into the promised land fills Hegel with a sense of manifest destiny and a quite understandable excitement, which appears again and again in the text despite his demand that ecstasy be exercised and that all attention be placed on

⁷Cf. the chapter entitled "Joachimitische Prophetie und Hegelsche Philosophie," in Jacob Taubes, Abendländische Eschatologie (Bern: A. Franke Verlag, 1947) pp. 90-98, in which direct parallels are drawn between the historical outlook of both men, and in which the eschatological motif is held to be central to Hegel's outlook.

⁸The Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 135.

"the march of cold necessity in the subject-matter."

No doubt there is much truth in Royce's interesting comparison of the literary form of the Phenomenology with the romances of Goethe, Novalis, and Tieck,⁹ for Hegel gives the human spirit a kind of biographical treatment and pictures it moving from episode to episode as hero of the story, while at the same time carrying on by means of the story a philosophical discussion. But the analogy which would seem to be even more apposite is that of the Bible. The Bible tells a story of cosmic proportions, as does the Phenomenology. The theme of the Bible is sin and salvation; the theme of the Phenomenology is estrangement and reconciliation. Like the Bible, the Phenomenology describes the vast panorama of human existence in terms of one central perspective, and although there is a great difference in terminology the two foci of this perspective are the same in both books; God and man and the relationship between them. Like the Bible also, the Phenomenology spends most of its time telling us about sinners who need redemption, and both books tell their story in concrete terms--myth, historical event, parable, etc.

The word "parable" suggests an important point. We have used the word earlier in our study, and also here, because Hegel's use of historical material does not attempt to give a literal transcription of what happened, and because his presentation of the material is parabolic--calculated to teach a lesson or to

⁹Josiah Royce, Lectures on Modern Idealism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), p147-151.

carry a "message." But "parable" does not do justice to Hegel's view of history. It connotes "made-up" stories, fantasies perhaps, and this is far from Hegel's intention. He claims that his descriptions express the meaning of certain types of experience, certain periods of history, certain social institutions which have developed through the years. And to know the meaning (purpose) of something is really to know it. For there is no such thing as "pure fact." Fact and interpretation always are inextricably bound together.¹⁰ Here again the parallel between the biblical outlook and Hegel's is instructive. Just as from the standpoint of Christ all previous history "falls into place" as a period of preparation, so from the standpoint of the new era of true knowledge Hegel can see "what really

¹⁰This seems to be what Hegel has in mind when early in the Preface he says that "philosophy has its being essentially in the element of that universality which encloses the particular within it." (Page 67) It is not bound to bare facts, to externalities. Natural science, on the other hand, whose ideal of knowledge is so authoritative nowadays that philosophy is expected to accept its criteria, never gets "inside" the facts, and therefore never gains true knowledge. "Its purpose or principle is quantity. This is precisely the relationship that is non-essential. . . . The process of knowledge goes on, therefore, on the surface, does not affect (interpret) the concrete fact itself, does not touch its inner nature or notion, and hence is not a conceptual way of comprehending." (pp. 102-103) What Hegel calls scientific thought is quite different. It begins with the thought of the subject-matter in general, submits this thought "to the earnestness of actual life in all its fulness which leads to an experience of the subject-matter itself," and then, reflecting on experience, it "strenuously penetrates to the very depths of its meaning." (p. 70) As Marcuse says, "There is, in the last analysis, no truth that does not essentially concern the living subject and that is not the subject's truth." (Op.cit., p. 113) Cf. also Phenomenology, p.83, where Hegel comments on the current fashion of rejecting the notion of external purpose and contends that it must be brought back in its immanent Aristotelian sense.

happened" during past centuries. He can undertake to present human existence--which means human experience (fact and interpretation)--as a systematically articulated series with a beginning and an end linked together and gradually brought together by a single purpose. In its own way every description of life which Hegel places before us illustrates that purpose and is supposed to contribute to our final acceptance of that purpose as the truth.

Strictly speaking, "the truth is the whole."¹¹ Every stage in the progress of history must be studied before the meaning of history can be comprehended. This places us in a difficult position, for the scope of our study does not permit following the story step by step.¹² However, since Hegel himself is inconsistent enough to write a long preface after dismissing prefaces as useless, perhaps we may disregard his warning that it is impossible to deal with any truth except one deal with all truth.

The Phenomenology offers many examples of estrangement for our study, for although it is designed to undergird the self-confidence of man, it portrays in a vivid way the anxiety and despair which threaten the actual existence of most people most of the time. It is constructed on the fundamental premise that up to the present time every particular form of historical

¹¹The Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 81.

¹²"The real subject-matter is not exhausted in its purpose, but in working the matter out; nor is the mere result attained the concrete whole itself, but the result along with the process of arriving at it." (Ibid., p. 69)

existence and experience, without exception, has been one-sided, irregular, incomplete--doomed to frustration and self-destruction. One might say that Hegel's intense faith in inevitable progress allows him to be brutally realistic without running the danger of despair. To those of us to whom this faith seems doubtful, his descriptions mediate a sense of the mysterium and tremendum of our existence far more disturbing than anything his contemporaries felt when they first read the book. We shall concentrate on certain sections which have special relevance to the idea of estrangement, but the concept is so central to the structure of Hegel's story of man's age-long search for Truth that we shall be touching most of the stages through which he traces human experience.

The first set of illustrations in the Phenomenology with which we are concerned might be called "the birth and frustration of individualism." The most interesting feature about them is Hegel's suggestion that self-consciousness per se involves a sense of insecurity. Naïve or primitive individualism is introduced as a completely self-centered self-hood which experiences itself as the focus of all reality and which feels threatened whenever a second focus of self-hood enters its territory. A crude struggle for survival follows. But self-hood is a social contrast effect (Royce). "Selves recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another."¹³ So a live and let live policy must be adopted. However, recognition does not imply acceptance. It may imply a quite different strategy. The self

¹³Ibid., p. 231.

may say: "If I can't get rid of this other fellow, at least I can dominate him. I shall enhance my sense of independence by making him work for me."

Hegel describes this stage of self-consciousness in a short story entitled "Lordship and Bondage." At first glance, the position of lord seems much superior to that of slave. Who would not rather be master than servant? The lord orders, the slave obeys. The slave works, the lord enjoys the fruits of his labors. But the question is whether through his ascendancy the lord gains full independence--self-sufficient selfhood.¹⁴ He does not. For just when he has effectively achieved control over the slave he becomes dependent on him. He becomes a spectator; he is a self only by seeing the slave work for him. What about the slave? Here the situation is reversed. The slave seems to be completely subordinated to the lord. He acknowledges the other's independence and his own dependence. Yet in the meantime he works, he is actively getting control over the world of experience. Quite unaware of what is happening, he is exercising independence. He is the one who is becoming a self; therefore he is far stronger than the lord.

Just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is: being a consciousness repressed within itself, it will enter into itself, and change round into real and true independence.¹⁵

¹⁴Cf. the Abraham story in Chapter Two.

¹⁵The Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 237.

This is the story, with its surprise ending reminiscent of O. Henry. Hegel proceeds to comment on it in a memorable passage. He says that the slave takes the lord to be "the independent consciousness existing for itself," the essential reality, but that the self-consciousness of the slave

does in fact contain within itself this truth of pure negativity and self-existence, because it has experienced this reality within it. For this consciousness was not in peril and fear for this element or that, nor for this or that moment of time, it was afraid for its entire being; it felt the fear of death, the sovereign master. It has been in that experience melted to its inmost soul, has trembled throughout its every fibre, and all that was fixed and steadfast has quaked within it. This complete perturbation of its entire substance, this absolute dissolution of all its stability into fluent continuity, is, however, the simple, ultimate nature of self-consciousness, absolute negativity, pure self-referrent existence, which consequently is involved in this type of consciousness.¹⁶

To be conscious of oneself is to be anxious about oneself, for freedom both establishes selfhood and threatens it with annihilation. Beneath all specific fears there is a basic anxiety, the nameless dread which is "afraid for its entire being." Fear of losing the self proves the existence of the self.

This positive revealed in the negative indicates that Hegel is moving in the Augustinian tradition. His description brings to mind Augustine's sentence:

Whosoever apprehends that he doubts, apprehends a truth, and is certain of that which he apprehends, is therefore certain of truth.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 237.

¹⁷ Augustine, De Vera Religione, XXXIX, lxxiii; quoted by Pryzwara, "St. Augustine and the Modern World," A Monument to St. Augustine (London: Sheed & Ward, 1945), p. 253.

To this must be added Descartes' "universal doubt" and its culmination in "cogito, ergo sum." In this passage, however, Hegel seems to be even closer to sheer existence than these other two versions of fundamental negative experience. They refer directly to the indubitability of thought, but Hegel seems, for a moment at least, to be dealing with man as man, with man as a being who knows he must die. "To fear losing oneself is to discover that one is a self" means that man stands face to face with the ultimate question of "to be or not to be?". And he confronts this question not as thinker alone, but with an awareness that death threatens him.

What Hegel gives with one hand, however, he takes away with the other. This passage is puzzling because we know that he closely identifies thought and being, thought and self. Thus he goes on to say of the slave's consciousness of the dissolution of all things that

in serving and toiling the bondsman actually carries out (this dissolution). By serving he cancels in every particular aspect his dependence on and attachment to natural existence, and by his work removes this existence away.¹⁸

In terms of the self-world correlation, which obviously is the topic of discussion, the point is that the world which every self "has" is not the alien world it takes it to be but actually an expression of the self.¹⁹ Thus the final situation is this:

In the master, the bondsman feels self-existence to be something external, an objective fact; in fear self-existence is present within himself; in fashioning the

¹⁸The Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 238.

¹⁹Cf. ibid., p. 238.

thing, self-existence comes to be felt explicitly as his own proper being, and he attains the consciousness that he himself exists in his own right and on his own account (an und fur sich). By the fact that the form is objectified, it does not become something other than the consciousness moulding the thing through work; for just that form is his pure self-existence, which therein becomes truly realized.²⁰

Continuing in the context of the self-world correlation--and now we begin to see the outlines of a familiar picture--what the story of Lordship and Bondage teaches is that the self which transcends the self-world correlation and looks at it merely as a spectator is a parasite. Authentic self-hood depends on participation. One thing more is needed. This self must recognize the fact that it is self-existent, that the self it thinks is above the world actually is in the world.

Thus the trinitarian and incarnational structure of the self-world correlation turns up at the end of the story as the main concern which has been behind the scenes all the time.²¹ If we remember that the irreconcilable transcendence just mentioned has appeared earlier as the attitude characteristic of the understanding, and if we recall that the understanding has been called a power which kills life by chopping it into an endless series of dead entities, we cannot help wondering whether the profundity we found in the passage on the fear of death may not have been read in. If the only death involved here is the "death" introduced by the understanding, the words "peril" and "fear" be-

²⁰Ibid., p. 239.

²¹Jacob Taubes, in his recent book, Abendlandische Eschatologie, op. cit., points out that the very word Selbstbewusstsein (self-consciousness) implicitly contains the dialectic, for in its three elements "the self is connected with being through consciousness." p. 158. (my italics)

come rhetorical devices and lose their power as symbols of an experience which shakes the very foundations of man's life. The story simply tells us that when the self-contradictory and self-defeating implications of the understanding's attempts to gain knowledge are realized, chaos ensues for a moment. Yet when all the hard and fast divisions of the estranged world are dissolved, reason appears in the midst of the flux and introduces a new type of order--dialectical process.

There is a dramatic, semi-oracular pronouncement in the preface of the Phenomenology which relates understanding, death, the life of mind, and the self in such a way as to illuminate our discussion and to bring us to some conclusions about the meaning of the passage in the Lordship and Bondage episode which aroused special interest.

The action of separating the elements is the exercise of the force of Understanding, the most astonishing and greatest of all powers, or rather the absolute power. The circle, which is self-enclosed and at rest, and qua substance, holds its own moments, is an immediate relation, the immediate, continuous relation of elements with their unity, and hence arouses no astonishment. But that an accident as such, when cut loose from its containing circumference,--that what is bound and held by something else and actual only by being connected with it,--should obtain an existence all its own, gain freedom and independence on its own account--this is the portentous power of the negative; it is the energy of thought, of pure ego. Death, as we may call that unreality, is the most terrible thing, and to keep and hold fast what is dead demands the greatest force of all. . . . But the life of mind is not one that shuns death, and keeps clear of destruction; it endures death and in death maintains its being. It only wins its truth when it finds itself utterly torn asunder. It is this mighty power, not by being a positive which turns away from the negative. . . . on the contrary, mind is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and dwelling with it. This dwelling beside it is the magic power that converts the negative into being.²²

²²The Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 93.

Kroner calls this a most personal and at the same time a most impersonal profession of faith.²³ This is an apt characterization. Death as the inescapable threat of non-being is pushed into the background, and Hegel marvels at the "magic power" of reason (the dialectical, dynamic self actively uniting self and world) which constantly and infallibly maintains life in being. Death is not really death but merely estrangement. This is a death within life, not a death which ends life. It is a death within the self, not a death which destroys the self. Thus when Hegel writes, in the last paragraph of his comments on Lordship and Bondage,

if (the self) has endured not absolute fear, but merely some slight anxiety, the negative reality has remained external to it, its substance has not been through and through infected thereby,²⁴

we no longer see a picture of a man in despair of his very life, but we see a man who has not yet fully accepted the self-destructive implications of the understanding, and who therefore is not yet ready to place his reliance on dialectical reason.

Perhaps, then, we must say that Hegel was being more profound than he knew when he wrote the passage which relates anxiety and self-consciousness so intimately. Or perhaps it is an echo of a period in his own life--the months between the breakdown of his strict Kantianism and the discovery of "the pantheism of love"--during which his world crumbled around him and he may have experienced despair. At any rate, the dominant note is now confidence.

²³Kroner, op. cit., Introduction, p. 53

²⁴Phenomenology, op. cit. p. 240

It is not man's finiteness but rather his infinity which excites Hegel's wonder and his interest. This is beautifully illustrated in the credo cited above, in words which cannot help but arrest one's attention.

That an accident as such, when cut loose from its containing circumference...should obtain an existence all its own, gain freedom and independence on its own account..²⁵

The deepest mystery of human nature is freedom, and the deepest mystery of freedom is the fact that man knows himself to be finite. For this knowledge proves that he is more than finite. He is but a particle of the universe, yet he transcends it. Thus he is not only a particular who knows the universal, but in some sense he is also a universal who knows the particular. We have learned that the true self must participate in particularity. Now we learn that the true self likewise must participate in universality. Hegel explores this curious doubleness in man's nature in the second half of the chapter entitled "The Truth which Conscious Certainty of Self Realizes." He begins with the essential discovery which the slave has made:

Thinghood, which received its shape and form through labor, is no other substance than consciousness..²⁶

Or as it is phrased in a famous sentence in the Preface:

In my view--a view which the developed exposition of the system itself can justify--everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well..²⁷

Translating this into the vocabulary of our discussion, thinking

²⁵ Ibid., p. 93

²⁶ Ibid., p. 242

²⁷ Ibid., p. 80

consists in knowing that the objective world really is a subjective world, that in dealing with the world man is dealing with himself.

In thinking I am free, because I am not in an other, but remain simply and solely in touch with myself; and the object which for me is my essential reality, is in undivided unity with my self-existence; and my procedure in dealing with notions is a process within myself.²⁸

What we have, then, is a new attitude or mode of consciousness, "a type of consciousness which takes on the form of infinite, or one whose essence consists in unimpeded movement of consciousness,"²⁹ that is, in pure thought.

But now a problem arises. Remember, we are dealing with the individual self. This new focus of free infinitude is a single individual set in the midst of countless other individuals. What is more, this individual seems to be alone in the realization of free thought. The other individuals are caught in the mutual frustration of struggling for mastery over one another and over the world; they are in the grip of estrangement. How shall freedom of the mind be exercised in such a competitive and dehumanizing situation? Hegel answers: "Perhaps the only live option is for the self to become a Stoic."

The essence of this consciousness is to be free, on the throne as well as in fetters, throughout all the dependence that attaches to its individual existence, and to maintain that stolid lifeless unconcern which persistently withdraws

²⁸ Ibid., p. 243. In the smaller Logic we read: "The real nature of the object is brought to light in reflection; but it is no less true that this exertion of thought is my act. If this be so, the real nature is a product of my mind, in its character of thinking subject--generated by me in my simple universality, self-collected and removed from extraneous influences--in one word, in my Freedom." (Hegel, The Logic of The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, London: Oxford University Press, 1892; trans. William Wallace, p. 44.)

²⁹ Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 242.

from the movement of existence, from effective activity as well as from passive endurance, into the simple essentiality of thought.³⁰

Obviously the freedom of the Stoic is negative. It is an escapist "freedom from" rather than a creative "freedom for." It is the form of freedom without its content.

Freedom of thought takes only pure thought as its truth, and this lacks the concrete filling of life. It is, therefore, merely the notion of freedom and not freedom itself.³¹

The next step, therefore, is Scepticism, which "is the actual experience of what freedom of thought is."³²

The entire unessentiality and unsubstantiality of the "other" (the world) becomes a reality for consciousness. Thought becomes thinking which wholly annihilates the being of the world with its manifold determinateness.³³

³⁰Ibid., p. 244. Hegel follows this sentence with the interesting comment: "It is a freedom which can come on the scene as a general form of the world's spirit only in a time of universal fear and bondage, a time, too, when mental cultivation is universal, and has elevated culture to the level of thought." (p. 245) Marcuse interprets this to mean that it is the fears and anxieties of modern competitive society which Hegel has in mind here, and suggests that the alienating power of this society's institutions induces a sense of hopelessness in Hegel and leads him in his own thought to give the predominant position to freedom of thought rather than freedom of action. (Cf. Marcuse, op. cit., pp. 118-119) On the second point we may reserve judgment. The first, however, is convincing, and is an indication that in all of his historical interpretations Hegel has before his eye his own contemporary situations and his acute awareness of its needs.

³¹Ibid., p. 245. "Stoicism, therefore, got embarrassed, when, as the expression went, it was asked for the criterion of truth in general, i.e. properly speaking, for a content of thought itself. To the question what is good and true, it responded by giving again the abstract, contentless thought; the true and good are to consist in reasonableness. But this self-identity of thought is simply once more pure form, in which nothing is determinate." (p. 246)

³²Ibid., p. 245.

³³Ibid., p. 245.

Not only does the sceptic deny the reality of the empirical, but he takes himself to be an entirely fortuitous individual consciousness; he chooses to be entirely negative and to deny all substantiality whatsoever. As Hegel says:

This consciousness is neither more nor less than an absolutely fortuitous embroglio, the giddy whirl of a perpetually self-creating disorder... . It finds its freedom, at one time, in the form of elevation above all the whirling complexity and all the contingency of mere existence, and again, at another time, likewise confesses to falling back upon what is unessential, and to being taken up with that.³⁴

The distinctive feature of Scepticism, then, is that the Sceptic experiences finiteness and infinity, identity and non-identity, immutability and contingency, consecutively but never simultaneously.³⁵ He is not explicitly aware of his own doubleness, not conscious of himself both "as self-liberating, unalterable, self-identical, and as utterly self-confounding, self-perverting."³⁶

The next step is conscious self-estrangement, which Hegel presents as the final stage of pure individualism. He calls this consciousness "das unglückliches Bewusstsein," which Baillie translates "the unhappy consciousness" and Royce "the contrite

³⁴Ibid., p. 249.

³⁵Once again, however, Hegel insists that the positive is more fundamental than the negative, and he illustrates it by showing that even in the sceptic's negative refrain that all is vanity, the stable infinite ground which sustains his life shines through his denials. The sceptical consciousness "announces absolute disappearance but the announcement is, and this consciousness is the evanescence expressly announced. It announces the nullity of seeing, hearing, and so on, yet itself sees and hears. It proclaims the nothingness of essential ethical principles, and makes these very truths the sinews of its own conduct." (p. 250)

consciousness." The universality and individuality that were shared between two individuals--the Lord and the Bondsman--and which were experienced successively by the Sceptic, come to be experienced simultaneously by a single individual. The self discovers that it is two selves. The self-estranged self views its two selves as at war with one another, as mutually alienated. It regards one of them, the changeless, as the true self, while the other one, the changeable, it regards as the false self. It aspires to deliver itself from the false self, but since the self is irrevocably individual, it cannot successfully lose itself in pure universality.

This aspiration is itself the Contrite Consciousness, and contains forthwith the knowledge of the opposite, namely of its own individuality. The Changeless, when it enters consciousness, is sicklied o'er with individuality; instead of being lost in the consciousness of the Changeless, individuality arises ever afresh therein.³⁶

Thus the self is perpetually frustrated, separated from its ardently desired unity and certainty. This self-estrangement is the reason for its unhappiness, its feeling of always being guilty.

However, this suffering is an educative discipline. The self learns one fundamental lesson: neither individuality nor universality can be annulled, therefore they must be mutually interdependent.

³⁶Hegel Selections, ed. J. Loewenberg (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), "The Contrite Consciousness," trans. Josiah Royce, pp. 82-83. Since Royce's translation is much more pungent, much less wooden than Baillie's, we shall quote from his version in this section.

Individuality is made manifest in the changeless, and the changeless is made manifest in individuality.³⁷

Significantly enough, this discovery is similar to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation in which Jesus as the Christ is described as the Godhead "made manifest in historical individuality." Almost before we notice what is happening, Hegel introduces a profound discussion of incarnational and trinitarian dogma. This is another example of the fact that the deepest problems Hegel tries to solve invariably lead him to philosophical theology (or theological philosophy), that is, to a speculative adaptation of Christian doctrine. In a passage reminiscent of the one quoted in chapter two of our study which applies the symbols of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to the human self, he describes the underlying meaning of the experience of self-estrangement.

For the Contrite Consciousness there result three ways in which individuality and the Changeless are linked. . . . In the first stage the Changeless appears only as the remote Self. In passing through the second stage, consciousness learns that the Changeless is as much an incarnate individual as it is itself; in the third stage, consciousness reaches the grade of Spirit, rejoices to find itself in the Spirit, and becomes aware that its individuality is reconciled with the universal.³⁸

Unfortunately, the self-estranged self has not reached the third stage which completes the trinitarian cycle. It cannot seem to realize that it itself is an incarnation of the Changeless.³⁹ Hegel launches into a trenchant criticism of traditional

³⁷Ibid., p. 37.

³⁸Ibid., p. 83.

³⁹It already belongs to the Contrite Consciousness to be one individual soul in the midst of its doubleness. It is in fact the very gazing of one Self into another; it is both these selves; it has no nature save in so far as it unites the two. But thus far

Christological thought, which interprets the Incarnation historically rather than existentially. So far as the teaching of the Church goes, the Changeless, in taking on its incarnate form,

has not only retained but actually confirmed its character of remoteness. For although, in assuming a developed and incarnate individuality, it seems on the one hand to have approached the individual, still, on the other hand, it now stands over against him as an opaque fact of sense, with all the stubbornness of the actual about it.⁴⁰

In the Incarnation the Changeless has entered the world of facts; it has become a "piece of history."

It follows necessarily that in the world of time it has vanished, that in space it is far away, and forever far remains.⁴¹

But in the experience of self-developing selfhood, the truth of the Incarnation is revealed as a present reality. Incarnation is a description of the relationship between individuality and universality, finiteness and infinity, existence and essence, humanity and divinity, in every man. Hegel is attempting to refute traditional views by an analysis of human experience, and to establish the relevance of Christian truth to contemporary life. For him the Trinity is the form (dynamic process) and the Incarnation is the content (concrete universality) of the unity of every individual self. Jesus Christ is the symbol of this concrete universality, of the unity of the changeless and the changing.⁴² In the light of

it does not yet know this, its real essence; it has not yet entered into possession of this unity." (Ibid., p. 81.)

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 85.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 85

⁴²In his book on western eschatology Taubes, op.cit., p. 162, illustrates the way in which Hegel interprets the death and resurrection of Christ in the same universally operative way.

this opposition traditional Christianity must be considered a "half-way house," for the Christian believer does not grasp the implications of his faith.

That his object, the Unchangeable, which assumes essentially the form of particularity, is his own self, the self which is particularity of consciousness--this is not established for him.⁴³

Thus according to Hegel the position of the Christian is somewhat pathetic. Salvation is always close at hand, but his presuppositions forbid his accepting it. For he believes that God (the Unchangeable --the true Self) must always remain "beyond."⁴⁴ Therefore his assurance of self-possession remains fragmentary; he has "intimations," but his complete selfhood never is securely confirmed.

This poses a serious dilemma both for Christian thought and for Christian action. In the realm of thought, since ultimate reconciliation is deemed impossible, the Christian substitutes devotion for serious intellectual effort. He only makes a feint at thinking.

Such thought remains the mere formless tinkling of an altar bell, or the wreathing of warm incense smoke--a thinking in music, such as never reaches an organized notion, wherein alone an inner objectivity could be attained. This limitless and devout inner feeling finds indeed its object, but as something uncomprehended and so as a stranger.⁴⁵

In the realm of action, the Christian projects his inner discord on the world. On the one hand, the world is not essentially vain,

⁴³The Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 257. (Impersonal pronouns translated into personal pronouns.)

⁴⁴"It cannot be found where it is sought, for it is meant to be just a 'beyond,' that which can not be found." (Ibid., p. 258)

⁴⁵Royce translation, op. cit., p. 87.

for a world in which the Incarnation has taken place at one time is in a way a sanctified world. On the other hand, the world is not wholly sanctified; it still is vain, for the Christian does not recognize the world as his world and he does not consider his actions to have intrinsic value. His talents and virtues are a foreign gift granted to him by a stranger God; they are to be used for God's service, not for his own self-expression and self-development.

Work and satisfaction thus lose all universal content and meaning; for if they had any, then they would involve a full self-possession.⁴⁶

The Christian does not renounce the world, neither does he enjoy it. He looks to God to do what he himself alone can do. He thanks God for what he himself has done.

The fact remains, however, that he acts. And just as in the case of the slave, action brings nearer to explicit recognition the unity which self-estrangement is destined and perhaps even "designed" to promote. This is best illustrated by the inner workings of asceticism, the most strenuous form of Christian activism. Interestingly enough, under asceticism Hegel discusses not only the stern rigor of Catholic monasticism but primarily the intramundane asceticism of Protestant individualism. The ascetic is sure that he has completely surrendered his ego and has reduced his natural consciousness to a mere thing--a body among bodies, a fact among facts. Yet no matter how sincerely he believes that God alone has enabled him to make this self-sacrifice, he cannot escape experiencing the freedom of his own decision. And when he

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 93.

goes to his priest for absolution or seeks forgiveness in prayer (for ascetic self-estrangement invariably harbors a feeling of guilt), he cannot help hearing in the promise of absolution

the still fragile assurance that his grief is, in the yet hidden truth of the matter, the very reverse, namely, the bliss of an activity which rejoices in its tasks, that its own miserable deeds are, in the same hidden truth, the perfect work. And the real meaning of this assurance is that only what is done by an individual is or can be a deed.⁴⁷

In spite of great emphasis on the importance of the individual, the Christian Church never has made this truth explicit. The Christian believer continues to live in self-estrangement, (selbstentfremdung) with a double self and a double world.. He does not live joyfully (securely) but oscillates between hope and despair, and he looks to heaven for his peace.

But this other world, where his activity and being are to become and to remain his own activity and being--what is this world but the world of civilized reason, where consciousness has the assurance that in its individuality it is and possesses all reality?⁴⁸

The individual Christian has become explicitly aware of his self-estrangement, but he remains unaware of the meaning of Reason. He misunderstands the nature of the human situation.

Royce's translation of "unglückliches" as contrite raises an important point, for "contrite" connotes the uneasy conscience, the ineradicable sense of sinfulness, which is the experiential reflection of conscious self-estrangement taken in an ethical

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 97.

⁴⁸ Royce, Lectures on Modern Idealism, op.cit. p. 185. This translation is a variant of the translation which Royce makes in the version included in the volume of selections. It is quoted because of the phrase "the world of civilized reason," which gives an adequate pre-view of the direction in which Hegel's story is moving.

or strictly religious sense. Hegel's polemical target in this section is the doctrine of original sin. He is convinced that this doctrine gives an incomplete and distorted picture of the human situation. You will remember that in the Early Theological Writings religion is defined as "our effort to overcome the discords necessitated by our development." In the Phenomenology philosophy rather than religion is nominated to do the job, but estrangement is more definitely than ever regarded as integral to human growth. If sin is a "fall" it is a "fall upwards," it is a blessing as well as a curse. The doctrine of original sin in its traditional form does not do justice to the fact that estrangement bears witness to man's dignity, to the fact that man as man is not only slave but also lord. Orthodoxy has interpreted the doctrine to mean that existence is wholly sinful and that salvation must "come down from above." Hegel insists that existence is sinful and redemptive, that salvation is integral to human life and never absent from it.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Although Hegel does not deal specifically with the doctrine of original sin in the chapter we have been studying, he says some interesting things in other writings which may be worth setting down here for our information. For instance, in the introduction to the smaller Logic he has a section on "The Story of the Fall" in which he writes: "The spiritual is distinguished from the natural, and more especially from the animal, life, in the circumstance that it does not continue a mere stream of tendency, but sunders itself to self-realization. But this position of severed life has in its turn to be suppressed, and the spirit has by its own act to win its way to concord again. The final concord then is spiritual; that is, the principle of restoration is found in thought, and thought only. The hand that inflicts the wound is also the hand which heals it....The serpent was the tempter. But the truth is, that the step into opposition, the awakening of consciousness, follows from the very nature of man: and the same history repeats itself in every son of Adam." (Logic, op.cit., pp. 54-55; cf. parallel in Philosophy of Religion, III, p. 53.) Sin is separation and separation is necessary if freedom is to be exercised and freedom must be exercised if man is to be man. Sin is a description of the

Specifically, Christian thought about sin has been one-sided. It has not done justice to the dimension of freedom which the achievement of human self-consciousness demonstrates. It has concentrated on the negative, guilty, "defeatist" aspect of self-estrangement, to the neglect of the positive implications of development and progress which also are present. Hegel believes that man's rational power of self-transcendence is the key to what might be called creative estrangement. In his analysis the element of self-fulfillment first appears in conscious experience as the recognition that self-consciousness is Reason.⁵⁰

human situation. It is significant to note that Hegel already in the early eighteenth century dismisses the idea of a historical Fall and makes the idea relevant to every man by emphasizing its function as a description of human life everywhere and at all times. Another idea customarily associated with the doctrine of original sin is that God is entirely good and that therefore whatever evil there is must be attributed to another source. In the Philosophy of Right Hegel's note on paragraph 139 deals with the mystery of origin and concludes that evil (estrangement) must be traced to God. "The problem of the origin of evil may be more precisely put in the form: 'How does the negative come into the positive?' If we begin by presupposing that in the creation of the world God is the absolutely positive, then, turn where we will, we shall never discover the negative within that positive, since to talk of God's 'permitting' evil is to ascribe to him a passive relation to evil which is unsatisfactory and meaningless. In the representative thinking of religious mythology there is no comprehension of the origin of evil; i.e., the positive and the negative are not discovered in one another, there is only a representation of the succession and juxtaposition, so that it is from outside that the negative comes into the positive. But this cannot satisfy thought, which demands a reason and a necessity and insists on apprehending the negative as itself rooted in the positive." (Philosophy of Right, trans. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 255.)

⁵⁰This insistence on the process character of self-consciousness indicates that Hegel certainly would have disagreed with Royce's use of the term "contrite" in translating "unglückliches." Jean Wahl, in his important study of the unfortunate consciousness (Le Malheur de la Conscience dans la Philosophie de Hegel, Les Editions Rieder, Paris, 1929), gives strong support to the view that metaphysical considerations are paramount throughout Hegel's treatment of consciousness, and that the important point is the suffering caused by incompleteness rather than contrition. For an analysis of many of the passages of the Phenomenology which are treated in the present study, see chapter three, pages 158-194.

Reason combines the discoveries of the Bondsman and the Unhappy Consciousness. The first was that in dealing with the world (objectivity and particularity) man deals with himself. The second was that in dealing with the Changeless (God, the true Self, universality) man deals with himself. "Reason is the conscious certainty of being all reality."⁵¹ But, says Hegel, this is only the beginning. This is a bare certainty. Reason is not yet in truth all reality. It is reality in principle; it must become reality in fact. Therefore the civilized man turns toward the world in order to translate his essential nature into multi-form existence. Uneasiness is replaced by confidence; other-worldliness gives way to interest in the world and to resolute action. Man becomes a builder of cultures and civilizations.

Reason has now a universal interest in the world, because it is certain of its presence in the world, or is certain that the actual present is rational. It seeks its "other," while knowing that it there possesses nothing else but itself: it seeks merely its own infinitude.⁵²

The underlined clause formulates the central question which runs through the succeeding stages of estrangement and reconciliation. What is the self's true infinitude? What is man's full stature? This is the same as asking, What is the terminus of self-estrangement? So far we have learned that individualism is not its terminus but its conscious starting-point. Hegel suggests that one of the most important results of a reasonable approach to life is the abandonment of excessive individualism.

⁵¹The Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 273.

⁵²Ibid., p. 281. (my italics)

Concretely, reason presents the problem of the relationship between the particular and the universal as a problem of the relationship between the individual and the society in which he lives. Individualism seeks "to save and keep itself for itself at the expense of the world or its own actuality, both of which appear to it to involve the denial of its own essential nature."⁵³ It seeks self-sufficient independence. Rational self-consciousness, on the other hand, seeks freedom, which is more than independence. Freedom means structure; independence means arbitrariness. Living freedom can be achieved by man only in mutual social participation. Society supplies the concrete "infinite" which the self needs for its self-realization.

In point of fact the notion of the realization of self-conscious reason--of directly apprehending complete unity with another in his independence: of having for my object an other in the fashion of a "thing" found detached and apart from me, and the negative of myself, and of taking this as my own self-existence--finds its complete reality in fulfilment in the life of a nation. Reason appears here as the fluent universal substance, as unchangeable simple thinghood which yet breaks up into many entirely independent beings, just as light bursts asunder into stars as innumerable luminous points, each giving light on its own account, and whose absolute self-existence is dissolved, not merely implicitly, but explicitly for themselves, within the simple independent substance. They are conscious within themselves of being these individual independent beings through the fact that they surrender and sacrifice their particular individuality, and that this universal again is the action of themselves as individuals, and is the work and product of their own activity. . . . As the individual in his own particular work ipso facto accomplishes unconsciously a universal work, so again he also performs the universal task as his conscious object. The whole becomes in its entirety his work, for which he sacrifices himself, and precisely by that means receives back his own self from it.⁵⁴

⁵³Ibid., p. 273.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 376-377.

This is Hegel's current restatement of his Hellenic ideal. He pays tribute to "the wisest men of antiquity" who declared that wisdom and virtue consist in living in accordance with the customs of one's own nation. The notion of the Volk defines the fullest realization of man's potentialities. But now Hegel asks whether any nation in fact has succeeded in perfectly integrating the life of its citizens so as to combine freedom and unity, unity and freedom. The answer is that since every existent social order is an individualized "spirit," a totality of customs and laws of a particular people, no nation has been able to satisfy the mind's demand for universality. The highly developed person transcends his society, criticizes its integrating principles (spirit), and in exercising this power is separated once again from society. Yet in grasping the notion of his society, that is, in comprehending its purpose and meaning, man has brought Spirit to consciousness of itself and has led it toward complete realization. This realization comes not in the form of concrete social life but in the form of knowledge.

Only with this knowledge (consciousness of its own nature) does the social order get its absolute truth, and not as it is in its bare existence.⁵⁵

The inner meaning of the ceaseless rise and fall of historical social orders would seem, therefore to be the cultivation of individuals up to the level where they can fully comprehend the problems of their society (and all societies), thus bringing society to self-awareness.

Hegel's interesting survey of social and political history

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 378.

begins with the individual submerged in the primary group (family) and it ends with the modern atomic individual sharing common rights of freedom and equality (and isolated loneliness) with all men.⁵⁶ This last stage, symbolized by the French Revolution, ends in the Terror--return to anarchy. The entire story pictures a continual oscillation between ordered freedom and anarchical independence, with no final equilibrium in sight. Hegel seems to believe that in the world of concrete politics chaos always is reduced to some kind of cosmos eventually, but that the reconciliation sought by the human spirit cannot be achieved in society as we have known it.

He turns from politics to culture, the realm of life in which social self-consciousness arises. The same historical ground is covered, but whereas political history is cyclical without being cumulative, culture exhibits a line of development which has continued through numerous successive political orders. Hegel gives this chapter a significant title: "Spirit in Self-estrangement--the Discipline of Culture." The pedagogical element in estrangement mentioned in connection with the Unhappy Consciousness is elaborated systematically and in great detail. The main difference here is that it is Spirit--the social whole--

⁵⁶Although he still venerates the Greeks, Hegel makes it clear in this survey that Greek society was an incomplete stage of human development. Discussing it under the title of "the ethical nation," he says: "Its realization simply reveals the contradiction and the germ of destruction, which lie hid within that very peace and beauty belonging to the gracious harmony and peaceful equilibrium of the ethical spirit. For the essence and meaning of this immediacy contains a contradiction: it is at once the unconscious peace of nature and the self-conscious unresting peace of spirit. On account of this "naturalness," this ethical nation is, in general, an individuality determined by nature, and therefore limited, and thus finds its dissolution in, and gives place to, another individuality." (Ibid., p. 498)

which is self-estranged and not merely the individual self. Yet the individual is implicated. In culture there is a double movement. On the one hand, the individual person

moulds himself by culture to what he inherently is, and only by so doing is he then something per se and possessed of concrete existence. The extent of his culture is the measure of his reality and power.⁵⁷

On the other hand, the individual is an agent of Spirit. For the individual's self-expression is Spirit's self-estrangement, its search for concrete actuality.

What seems here to be the individual's power and force . . . is the same thing as the actualization of the substance (Spirit) . . .

Spirit is the self-containedness and self-completeness of the whole, which splits up into substance as constantly enduring and substance as self-sacrificing, and which at the same time resumes substance into its own unity; a whole which is at once a flame of fire bursting out and consuming the substance, as well as the abiding form of the substance consumed.⁵⁸

From opposite directions both man as individual-universal and Spirit as universal-individual are seeking a common goal--reconciliation through self-knowledge. They meet in culture.

The basic element of culture is the word.

Language exists to be its content, and possesses authority qua spoken word; it is the power of utterance qua utterance which, just in speaking, performs what has to be performed.⁵⁹

The peculiar power of language is that it liberates man from the given. It enables him to grasp any concrete situation and to elevate it to universality. It also enables him to reveal himself as a self.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 515.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 516-518.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 530.

The I, that expresses itself, is apprehended as an ego; it is a kind of infection in virtue of which it establishes at once a unity with those who are aware of it, a spark that kindles a universal consciousness of itself.⁶⁰

Thus the power of the word is both intellectual and psychic. Hegel illustrates the psychic potency by pointing to the mysterious majesty which the name of a monarch carries.

This name....is the actual reality which universal power has inherently within itself: through the name the power is the monarch.⁶¹

He brings his analysis of culture to its climax by illustrating the sophistication which language makes possible in a cultural situation that has reached maturity, a maturity which does not possess the resources necessary to satisfy the human spirit. Spirit appears in the form of

universal talk and depreciatory judgment rending and tearing everything....(Yet) this judging and talking is the real truth, which cannot be got over, while it overpowers everything--it is that which in this real world is alone truly of importance. Each part of this world comes to find there its spirit expressed, or gets to be spoken of with esprit and finds said of it what it is.⁶²

This savage wit which pours scornful laughter on the confusion and apparent meaninglessness of a long cultural development is quite

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 530. "In speech the self-existent singleness of self-consciousness comes as such into existence, so that its particular individuality is something for others. Ego qua this particular pure ego is non-existent otherwise; in every other mode of expression it is absorbed in some concrete actuality, and appears in a shape from which it can withdraw; it turns reflectively back into itself, away from its act, as well as from its physiognomic expression, and leaves such an incomplete existence (in which there is always at once too much as well as too little), lying soulless behind. Speech, however, contains this ego in its purity; it alone expresses I, I itself."(p. 530)

⁶¹Ibid., p. 534.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 542-543

remarkable. It proves man's freedom from every given situation, and it also reveals an ultimate demand for truth in the light of which its destructiveness is justified because the motive is to overcome "the impure motives and perverted forms of insight found in the actual world."⁶³ The very fact that such an attack is possible means that in some sense falsity has been superseded. It indicates that whether the sophisticate knows it or not, he is trusting in the reality of ultimate meaningfulness. Actually he is not conscious of this meaning. He combines wistfulness with despair, and anaesthetizes his despair by making wry jokes about his irrational desire for security in a world which obviously doesn't offer any.⁶⁴

Where then shall man turn? What is the lesson which the "Discipline" of culture teaches? For one thing, the individual seems to be thrown back on himself once again. He learns that no act and no construction can bind him. He can step out of society and out of culture alike and survey them. In transcending them he experiences their utter contingency; they leave him insecure and homeless.

What really has happened is that man has learned to think.

⁶³Ibid., p. 559.

⁶⁴The cultured consciousness "has the most painful feeling, and the truest insight about itself--the feeling that everything made secure crumbles to pieces, that every limb of its existence is wracked and rent, and every bond broken: moreover, it consciously expresses this feeling in words, pronounces judgment and gives sparkling utterance concerning all aspects of its condition." (Ibid., p. 559) Jean Wahl, in Le Malheur de la Conscience, op. cit., says that the scepticism which Hegel represents is less that of a Montaigne than of a Pascal. He likens it to Ecclesiastes--a consciousness of the nothingness of the creature over against the infinite essence of God, not arriving at a reconciliation of the two but deeply concerned about it rather than merely ironical or detached. (cf. p. 163)

Hegel turns to the story of the struggle of Enlightenment against superstition in order to elucidate his point. He compares the individualism of belief fostered by the Reformation with the individualism of reason developed by the Enlightenment, and he concludes that rationalism simply has made the implications of Protestantism explicit. The Protestant consciously relates "a finite that inherently exists (himself) to an unknown and unknowable Absolute without predicates."⁶⁵ The Enlightenment rationalist brings this inner estrangement out into the open and says: "Away with the unknowable! Let's concentrate on the here and now."

The difference is merely that the one is enlightenment satisfied, while belief is enlightenment unsatisfied.⁶⁶

Sophisticated scepticism can easily degenerate from a kind of prophetic iconoclasm into complacent resignation regarding ultimate meaning. And this is what Hegel sees in many of his contemporaries. He remarks that the devotees of enlightenment seem to be quite happy, but that

It will yet be seen whether enlightenment can continue in its state of satisfaction; that longing of the troubled, beshadowed spirit, mourning over the loss of its spiritual world, lies in the background.⁶⁷

The question is whether the enlightened mind, having learned to think critically, can proceed from criticism to construction. For Hegel this is not a matter of possibility; it is a matter of necessity. He cautions that there is no return to naïvity after sophistication has been achieved. The development

⁶⁵The Phenomenology of Mind, pp. 588-589.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 589.

⁶⁷Ibid.

of the sceptical spirit

can only mean that it must as spirit return out of its confusion into itself, and win for itself a still higher level of conscious life.⁶⁸

This advance has been initiated in modern times by Kant and Fichte in their moral theory of the universe. They have acknowledged the centrality of the individual, but they also have realized that man is a social being. They have seen that the individual must participate in universal truth if it is to mean anything to him and if it is to become actualized, and that at the same time this truth must be impartial and objective, not subject to the independent whims of the individual. Their way of relating the individual to the universal is to define the substance of the social order as universal rational law, and then to assert that this same law is the real content of the moral man's self-consciousness. In other words, the acting individual can look upon himself as the self-regulating source of all universal conditions of action because the structure of these conditions is epitomized in his own being--and he possesses knowledge of this structure. This outlook would seem to provide a stable basis both for knowledge and for social life, but Hegel proceeds to demonstrate that it is as inadequate as it is noble.

One danger moral self-consciousness runs is that the universal aspect will get detached and become a purely objective "empire of the air"--noumenal without being phenomenal, essential but not existential. This again will tend to devaluate the actual course of events in history, making every achievement a mere

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 546.

approximation to a perfection impossible of attainment, making every action guilty.

The opposite danger is that if this external relationship between thought and existence is overcome, universality may be buried in the self and become purely subjective. It will appear in experience in the form of conscience--a binding claim on the self which the self can satisfy completely. The self interprets the ultimacy of this claim as the concrete presence of the universal, but into this imperative it pours a content which it derives from its natural individuality, a partial and contingent content which obviously is not universally valid.⁶⁹

⁶⁹The ground upon which the moral self bases its easy conscience is summarized by Hegel as follows: "A distinction between the universal consciousness and the individual self is precisely what has been cancelled, and the superseding of it constitutes conscience. Immediate knowledge on the part of self which is certain of itself is law and duty. Its intention, by being its own intention, is what is right... . Conscience, then, in its majestic sublimity above any specific law and every content of duty, puts whatever content it pleases into its knowledge and willing. It is moral genius and originality, which knows the inner voice of its immediate knowledge to be a voice divine; and since in such knowledge it directly knows existence as well, it is divine creative power, which contains living force in its very conception. It is in itself, too, divine worship, 'service of God,' for its action is the contemplation of this its own proper divinity." (Ibid., p. 662-663)

It should be noted also that in this section on conscience Hegel introduces language as a constructive rather than a destructive power. "Here again, then, we see language to be the form in which spirit finds existence. . . . The content, which language has here obtained, is no longer the self we found in the world of culture, perverted, perverting, and distraught. It is spirit which, having returned to itself, is certain of itself, certain in itself of its truth, or of its own act of recognition, and which is recognized as this knowledge. . . . What the language of conscience contains is the self knowing itself as essential reality. This alone is what language expresses, and this expression is the true realization of 'doing,' of action, and is the validation of the act. Consciousness expresses its conviction: in this conviction alone is the action duty: it holds good as duty, too, solely by the conviction being expressed. For universal self-consciousness stands detached from the specific act which

If the objective universality of the moral law is emphasized, the self experiences a perpetually uneasy conscience. If the subjective individuality of the moral law is emphasized, the self experiences inner peace and an easy conscience. Actually, neither danger of one-sidedness can be avoided. The moral self eventually becomes double-minded. The guilty (transcendent) self accuses the innocent (immanent) self of hypocrisy (ideology). The innocent self accuses the guilty self of puritanical legalism. Thus the peculiarity of the moral self-consciousness is that it is unable to give the two elements constituting its consciousness equal value and significance in its life. One or the other dominates, but both are consciously present. As has become obvious, we have here a repetition of the process of the Unhappy Consciousness. This time, however, it is going on inside a self fully conscious that it is Reason (process), conscious that it must do justice to both individuality (the self-world correlation) and universality (the immanent self-transcendent self correlation).

The familiar pattern inevitably repeats itself. The moral consciousness bears within its suffering a clue to the final step which must be taken if self-estrangement is to be overcome, and if the full dimensions of man's stature are to be revealed. The clue, of course, is that process is the unity of unity and disunity, that there could not be conscious self-estrangement unless at some level both "selves" are already reconciled. The way is open for conscious self-acceptance. Why should not the "inno-

merely exists; the act qua existence means nothing to it; what it holds of importance is the conviction that the act is a duty; and this appears concretely in language." (Ibid. pp 660-661)

cent" self admit that its morality is arbitrary individualism? And why should not the "guilty" self which has raised itself above its brother in self-righteous judgment admit that its demand for objective universality is legalism? Then both selves, being joined in mutual acknowledgment of guilt, may discover their oneness and their need of one another. This mutual forgiveness brings to explicit consciousness the implications of the fact that the self is a process. It means that finite defect, error, ignorance, contradiction, sin--all are somehow of the very nature of the self. The pure self cannot be incarnated without impurity. The rational self cannot be expressed without contradictions which seem irrational. What self-acceptance (forgiveness) reveals is that the true life of the human spirit lies in the constant transcending of difficulties and failures. At its best man's life is a process of conscious victory of continually changing forms of self-estrangement, each of which is inevitable but none of which is final.

Individual self-acceptance, however, is not complete in itself. For it must not be forgotten that man is a social being, that "no man liveth unto himself or dieth unto himself." If it is true that "the truth is the whole," while the life of every man remains fragmentary, then the power of self-acceptance in the midst of self-estrangement must come from beyond the individual. And if it is true that only that which is completely actualized can be known completely, while

the particular individual is incomplete mind, a concrete shape in whose existence, taken as a whole, one determinate characteristic predominates, while others are found only in blurred outline,⁷⁰

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 89.

the knowledge of complete reconciliation must come from beyond the individual. Both power and knowledge somehow depend on the activity of "the whole."

The reconciling affirmation, the 'yes' with which both egos desist from their existence in opposition, is the existence of the ego expanded into a duality, an ego which remains therein one and identical with itself, and possesses the certainty of itself in complete relinquishment and its opposite: it is God appearing in the midst of those who know themselves in the form of pure knowledge.⁷¹

Historically man's consciousness of "the whole"--Absolute Being--appears in the history of religion. The distinctive feature of religious experience is that the center of gravity rests with the Absolute rather than with the self as such. The question man faces here is not, "What is my place in my world?" but rather, "What is Absolute Being--the universe--true reality?" To be sure, religion involves an interpretation of reality from the point of view of the inquiring self; after all, the self has a stake in the answer to this question, for it will not only give him insight concerning estrangement and reconciliation in their universal scope, but it also will tell him who he really is, what his full potentialities are. Yet his eyes are turned primarily away from himself toward the Absolute. He is grasped by an ultimate seriousness about the Truth, by a longing for knowledge so strong that he is willing to sacrifice his self-concern and self-preoccupation in order to seek it.

Concretely, religion is the inner core of social experience. Every man enters the realm of religion through becoming aware of a double dimension of ultimacy. He experiences a binding

⁷¹Ibid., p. 679.

claim upon him in his relationship to the nation or the church. These "universal" communities or communions are "beyond" him. Participating in them he becomes aware of a common consciousness running through their life that there also is something "beyond" them--a super-sensuous, eternal, all-encompassing ground of power and meaning. The history of religion is a story of the gradual clarification of man's knowledge of this Absolute Being. Or to put it another way, this time from the standpoint of man's understanding of himself, the history of religion is a story of man's gradual approach to the terminus of his seemingly endless possibilities of transcending himself and his world. And to add a third version, Hegel's distinctive outlook, the history of religion is simply the history of knowledge; the entire Phenomenology in each of its stages is permeated by the dialectic of human discovery and divine disclosure. Knowledge is revelation. Human reason is divine grace. Hegel believes that religion never has solved the mystery of the relationship of man and the Absolute satisfactorily. Religion culminates in an intuition of a basic reciprocity between the two in knowledge, but it never achieves final and complete knowledge of knowledge.

Let us trace briefly the way in which Hegel arrives at this conclusion. The history of religion before Christ is divided into two general periods, non-Greek and Greek. The early forms define the universe in terms of powers of nature and are preoccupied with the natural world. These powers are conceived to be foreign and mysterious. They also are viewed as living, and this element is interpreted in a new way by the Greeks. Greek religious thought humanizes the absolute living powers. The marvelous

creativity of Greek art portrays the gods as ideal types of human beings. It "pours" divinity into personality. This tendency is carried to extreme when in Greek tragedy mortal heroes displace the immortal gods, and when in comedy the ancient religion is dissolved as the divine dimension disappears completely in humanistic scepticism. But the universe remains--powerful far beyond man's poor power to add or detract. Mythical personifications have been exposed as human fancies, and the Absolute becomes hidden again. In a dramatic passage Hegel pictures the dissolution of Greek religion as in fact the fullness of time, the moment in which a new and final apprehension of the Absolute is ready to appear. All the forms of intellectual experience and emotional experience crowd around the birthplace of the religion which is to complete their meaning.

These compose the periphery of the circle of shapes and forms which attend, an expectant and eager throng, round the birthplace of spirit as it becomes self-conscious. Their center is the yearning agony of the unhappy despairing consciousness, a pain which permeates all of them and is the common birthpang at its production --the simplicity of the pure notion, which contains those forms as its moments.⁷²

Christianity is born with the belief that

Absolute Spirit has taken on the shape of self-consciousness inherently, and therefore also consciously to itself.⁷³

Spirit, here, has in it two sides, which are above (in pre-Christian religion) represented as two converse propositions: one is this, that substance empties itself of itself and becomes self-consciousness; the other is the converse, that self-consciousness empties itself of itself and makes itself into the form of "thing," or makes itself universal self. Both sides have in this way

⁷²Ibid., p. 755.

⁷³Ibid., p. 757.

met each other, and, in consequence, their true union has arisen.⁷⁴

This incarnation of Divine Being, its having essentially and directly the shape of self-consciousness, is the simple content of Absolute Religion. Here the Divine Being is known as Spirit; this religion is the Divine Being's consciousness concerning itself that it is Spirit. For spirit is knowledge of itself in a state of alienation of self: spirit is the Being which is the process of retaining identity with itself in its otherness.⁷⁵

To be in its notion that which reveals and is revealed--this is the true shape of spirit; and moreover, this shape, its notion, is alone its very essence and its substance. Spirit is known as self-consciousness, and to this self-consciousness it is directly revealed, for it is this self-consciousness itself. The divine nature is the same as the human, and it is this unity which is intuitively apprehended.⁷⁶

The core of Christianity, then, is that Absolute Being is Absolute Spirit--self-initiating, self-propelling, self-completing, self-knowing process.⁷⁷

Absolute Being, when not grasped as spirit, is merely the abstract void, just as spirit which is not grasped as

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 755.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 758.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 759-760.

⁷⁷The theme of the Trinity enters here once again. "There are thus three moments to be distinguished: Essential Being; explicit Self-Existence, which is the express otherness of essential Being, and for which that Being is object; and Self-existence or Self-knowledge in that other. The essential Being beholds only itself in its Self-Existence, in its objective otherness. In thus emptying itself, in this kenosis, it is merely within itself: the independent Self-existence which excludes itself from essential Being is the knowledge of itself on the part of essential Being. It is the 'Word,' the Logos, which when spoken empties the speaker of himself, outwardizes him, and leaves him behind emptied, but is as immediately perceived, and only this act of self-perceiving is the actual existence of the 'Word.' Hence, then, the distinctions which are set up are just as immediately resolved as they are made, and are just as directly made as they are resolved, and the truth and the reality consist precisely in this self-closed circular process."Ibid., p. 767.

process is merely an empty word.⁷⁸

The trinitarian Spirit is the substance of the consciousness which unites the Christian communion. From the standpoint of the individual believer there is a dialectical unity of identity and non-identity between himself and this Spirit.

Spirit is not the individual subject by himself, but the individual along with the consciousness of the communion. (Yet on the other hand) what spirit is for this communion is the complete whole of the individual spirit.⁷⁹

The divine and the human are the same and not the same. Man is identical with Absolute Spirit and not identical with it.

It is only both propositions that make the whole complete; and when the first is asserted and asseverated, it must be met and opposed by insisting on the other with unmovable obstinacy. Since both are equally right, they are both equally wrong, and their wrong consists in taking such abstract forms as "the same" and "not the same," "identity" and "non-identity," to be something true, fixed, real, and in resting on them. Neither the one nor the other has truth; their truth is just their movement.⁸⁰

Hegel describes religious experience as an intuition of this unifying movement.

At this point the incompleteness of religion becomes apparent. Intuition is the measure of its inadequacy. Hegel analyzes the language of the Church, the form in which it expresses itself, and he discovers a fatal flaw.

Pictorial presentation constitutes the characteristic form in which spirit is conscious of itself in the religious communion. This form is not yet the self-consciousness of spirit which has reached its notion as notion; the mediating process is still incomplete. In this connection of being and thought there is a defect; spiritual life is still cumbered with an unreconciled diremption into a "here" and a "beyond." The content is the true content,

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 767.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 763.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 777.

but all its moments, when placed in the element of mere imaginative presentation, have the character, not of being conceptually comprehended, but of appearing as completely independent aspects, externally related to one another.⁸¹

Separation⁸¹ independent internalization appear at the end of our study, as they appeared at the beginning, as characteristic marks of estrangement. It seems as though we have circled back to the point at which the Early Theological Writings broke off. For Hegel once again explains the difficulty in terms of a conflict between intuition (emotion) and intellect.

The spiritual communion has as its father its own proper action and knowledge, while its mother is eternal Love, which it merely feels, but does not behold in its consciousness as an actual immediate object. Its reconciliation, therefore, is in its heart, but still with its conscious life sundered in twain and its actual reality shattered.⁸²

But an examination of Hegel's criticism of Christian language reveals that the basic problem of estrangement is being formulated in a way never approached in the earlier writings and only inti-

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 763-764. "What we (the philosophers) are conscious of in our conception--that objective being is ultimate essence--is the same as what the religious consciousness is aware of. This unity of being and essence, of thought which is immediately existence, is immediate knowledge on the part of this religious consciousness just as it is the inner thought or the mediated reflective knowledge of this consciousness. For this unity of being and thought is self-consciousness and actually exists; in other words, the thought-constituted unity has at the same time this concrete shape and form of what it is. God, then, is here revealed, as He is; He actually exists as He is in Himself; He is real as Spirit. God is attainable in pure speculative knowledge alone, and only is in that knowledge, and is merely that knowledge itself, for He is spirit; and this speculative knowledge is the knowledge furnished by revealed religion. That knowledge knows God to be thought, or pure Essence; and knows this thought as actual being and as a real existence, and existence as the negativity of itself, hence as Self, an individual 'this' and a universal self. It is just this that revealed religion knows." (Ibid., p. 761)

⁸²Ibid., p. 784.

mated in the Phenomenology up to this point. Hegel charges that Church doctrine is inadequate because it is time-bound. It expresses the movement of Spirit, the immanence of the transcendent, but always in terms of history. Even its myths present truth in the guise of certain events which are supposed to have taken place once upon a time. The language of religion is infected with images of temporal movement, which means that the "here" and the "beyond" into which Christian thought splits truth are not so much heaven and earth as past and present.⁸³ In its ultimate dimension, the problem of estrangement is the problem of temporality.

Time is so central to the culminating chapters of the Phenomenology that we shall quote an extended passage in which Hegel summarizes his conviction that the last and greatest problem of knowledge is time, and that philosophy attains conclusive reconciliation by triumphing over it.

Time is just the notion definitely existent, and presented to consciousness in the form of empty intuition. Hence spirit necessarily appears in time, and it appears in time so long as it does not grasp its pure notion, i.e., so long as it does not annul time. Time is the pure self in external form, apprehended in intuition, and not grasped and understood by the self, it is the notion apprehended only through intuition. When this notion grasps itself,

⁸³"The conditions 'past' and 'distance' are merely the imperfect form in which the immediateness gets mediated or made universal; this is merely dipped superficially in the element of thought, is kept there as a sensuous mode of immediacy, and not made one with the nature of thought itself." (Ibid., p. 763)

"Synthetic pictorial thinking, . . . since it is only an instinct, mistakes its own real character, rejects the content along with the form, and, what comes to the same thing, degrades the content into a historical imaginative idea and an heirloom handed down by tradition. In this way there is retained and preserved only what is purely external in belief, and the retention of it as something dead and devoid of knowledge; while the inner element in belief has passed away, because this would be the notion knowing itself as notion." (Ibid., p. 768)

it supersedes its time character, comprehends intuition, and is intuition comprehended and comprehending. Time therefore appears as spirit's destiny and necessity, where spirit is not yet complete within itself; it is the necessity compelling spirit to enrich the share self-consciousness has in consciousness, to put into motion the immediacy of the inherent nature . . . ; or, conversely, to realize and make manifest what is inherent, regarded as inward and immanent, to make manifest that which is at first within--i.e., to vindicate it for spirit's certainty of self.

For this reason it must be said that nothing is known which does not fall within experience, or (as it is also expressed) which is not felt to be true, which is not given as an inwardly revealed eternal verity, as a sacred object of belief, or whatever other expressions we care to employ. For experience just consists in this, that the content,--and the content is spirit--in its inherent nature is substance and so object of consciousness. But this substance, which is spirit, is the development of itself explicitly to what it is inherently, and only as this process of reflecting itself into itself is it essentially and in truth spirit. It is inherently the movement which is the process of knowledge--the transforming of that inherent nature into explicitness, of Substance into Subject, of the object of consciousness into the object of self-consciousness, i.e., into an object that is at the same time transcended--in other words, into the notion. This transforming process is a cycle that returns into itself, a cycle that presupposes its beginning, and reaches its beginning only at the end. So far as spirit, then, is of necessity this self-distinction, it appears as a single whole, intuitively apprehended, over against its simple self-consciousness. And since that whole is what is distinguished, it is distinguished into the intuitively apprehended pure notion--Time--and the content--the inherent implicit nature. Substance, qua subject, involves the necessity, at first an inner necessity, to set forth in itself what it inherently is, to show itself to be spirit. The completed expression in objective form is--and is only when completed--at the same time the reflexion of substance, the development of it into the self. Consequently, until and unless spirit inherently completes itself, completes itself as a world-spirit, it cannot reach its completion as self-conscious spirit. The content of religion, therefore, expresses earlier in time than (philosophical) science what spirit is; but this science alone is the perfect form in which spirit truly knows itself. ⁸⁴

This is not easy reading. We shall re-shuffle the main points and comment on them. The star actor on the stage of the

⁸⁴Ibid., pp 800-801.

time process is "spirit," whose real identity, however, is something of a mystery. Is it spirit with a small "s" (man), or is it Spirit with a capital "s" (the Absolute)? From one vantage point Absolute Spirit is the central figure. It is ignorant of itself and labors under the necessity of achieving self-knowledge; apparently it must "complete itself as world-spirit (as a temporal process) before it can reach its completion as self-conscious spirit." The Absolute estranges itself from itself and becomes nature and history. But the basic character of time is incompleteness; knowledge gained in time bears the mark of its origin. Ultimately time must be annulled if knowledge is to be complete. The Absolute will not reach explicit self-knowledge until it discovers a way of formulating its knowledge which is not time-bound. Philosophy is this perfect formulation. It is Absolute Knowledge. The secret of its success is that it absorbs the horizontal past-present-future movement of time into the eternal circular movement of dialectical thought, which "presupposes its beginning and reaches its beginning only at the end." In philosophy

the concrete shape of the content (of every notion) is resolved by its own inherent process into a simple determinate quality. Thereby it is raised to logical form, and its being and essence coincide; its concrete existence is merely this process that takes place, and is eo ipso logical existence.⁸⁵

(Therefore) knowledge is no longer compelled to go beyond itself (into nature or history); it finds itself, and the notion corresponds to the object and the object to the notion.⁸⁶

The temporal movement of existence and the logical movement of essence are the same movement; history unfolds necessarily according

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 115.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 137-138.

to a dialectical pattern. For if Absolute Spirit is to learn what it is, the time process must illustrate Spirit's inherent and essential nature,⁸⁷ must supply an adequate ground for its knowledge of itself.

Man comes on the stage with the birth of knowledge, for human experience is the point of contact between Spirit unconscious of itself and Spirit conscious of itself. It is the laboratory in which knowledge is nurtured. The peculiarity of human experience is that it is two-dimensional. On the one hand man experiences self-estrangement--finitude, contingency, incompleteness. On the other hand he experiences reconciliation--the presence of Spirit as "an inwardly revealed verity." This situation is tailor-made for Absolute Spirit's needs. Temporality is the goad which drives man's thought towards the reconciliation offered by the infinity and certainty and completeness of philosophical knowledge, and this gives Absolute Spirit the self-knowledge it desires. Man's self-estrangement is a means towards the Absolute's end.

From the standpoint of the Absolute, estrangement and reconciliation are strictly dialectical; each necessarily implies the other. But reconciliation always precedes and follows estrangement. The secret power working in and through all historical forms of estrangement is ultimately a reconciliatory power. From the standpoint of man, the Absolute is alpha and omega--the beginning and the end.⁸⁸ Hegel calls up before our imagination the picture

⁸⁷Ibid., cf. p. 757.

⁸⁸Pryzwara, in a profound essay on "St Augustine and the Modern World," holds that at this point Hegel surmounts Protestant subjectivism and reaches a Catholic position. "The treatment adopted in his *System der Philosophie* does not only hark back unintentionally

of a vast divine cosmic process whose temporal becoming is determined step by step by a dialectical necessity; in this process man is a pawn; his life culminates in knowledge of the necessity in which he is engulfed, and he gains this knowledge not for his own sake but for the sake of the Absolute.

Yet this is a one-sided view of the drama of the time process. From another perspective man is the central figure. After all, history is the arena of man's activity and knowledge is a human achievement. According to Hegel, the inside story of human existence also is the quest for knowledge. Perennially man has tried to answer two basic questions: What is my true nature? Where is my true home? His answers have been interdependent, as becomes evident when we summarize Hegel's story of history in the light of these questions.

There have been two great epochs of at-homeness and two great epochs of homelessness during the course of recorded history.⁸⁹ The Greeks, culminating in Aristotle, visualized the world as a self-contained space in which man has his fixed place. They defined man as a natural being, as a comprehensible species beside other species, and specifically as the highest of animals and the lowest

to the form of the mediaeval Summa, to the principle which determines their method, 'God the starting-point and goal;' it also represents a return to the patristic mode of thought, which regarded the history of man's salvation as the revelation of a process within the Trinity, the 'economic' Trinity of the 'supereconomic.' That is to say, the characteristic tendency of Lutheranism to make everything centre in the salvation of man, soteriological anthropocentrism, is overcome by the fundamental Catholic orientation, God in Himself and His glory." (Pryzwara, op.cit., pp. 271-272.)

⁸⁹In a moving and illuminating essay entitled "What is Man?", Martin Buber traces the story of man's alternate "habitation and homelessness" in a way strikingly parallel to Hegel's.

of spirits. They felt at home in the midst of all things and participated imaginatively in them through culture. Nothing was alien to them. Then Greek society was disrupted and the human spirit experienced the insecurity and dread of homelessness. The second attempt to build a home for man was the systematization of Christian thought. Culminating in Thomas Aquinas, the Church pictured the cosmos as a two-story house with a cellar--heaven, earth, hell--and it interpreted man's life as a pilgrimage either up to heaven or down to hell. Hell was a threat, but once again man was given the security of knowing where he was; he was on the ground floor. So far as human self-knowledge was concerned, Christian thought tended to make the two-fold structure of body and soul so explicit that the unity of human nature was disrupted. The body supposedly belonged to earth alone and the soul supposedly belonged to heaven (or hell) alone. When man concentrated on earthly life he landed in hell, and when he concentrated on a heavenly bliss he devaluated earthly life. Christianity precipitated a crisis in man's understanding of himself.

However, it was modern science which actually tore down the walls of the home in which man was living. It destroyed the ancient spatial image of the universe by demonstrating that instead of being finite it is infinite, unlimited. Man became "lost in the stars," a stranger to himself and a wanderer in trackless spaces. Once more he was homeless. This brings us to modern times. Post-copernican man has had to seek new answers to both of his fundamental questions. Hegel claims to have the answers. No house can be built in space; therefore it must be built in time. Man's home is history, and man's true nature is the knowing activity

by means of which he comprehends the reliable order of history. Now that philosophy provides us with complete knowledge of history, the alternate epochs of at-homeness and homelessness fall into place as necessary phases in the progress of philosophizing. The former epochs of at-homeness were cases of premature reconciliation which demonstrated their incompleteness by executing their own self-dissolution. From the standpoint of a complete knowledge of man, self-estrangement is seen to be the necessary actualization of man's freedom of self-transcendence; for it is only by disrupting subhuman innocence (ignorance) that man achieves specifically human activity (thinking) and begins the long climb toward Absolute Knowledge. Man's freedom to think is of decisive importance; separation and externalization are initiated and overcome by man and by man alone. Hegel goes so far as to suggest that man's thinking is the only really free activity there is anywhere.⁹⁰ The very knowledge of dialectical necessity, which enables man to comprehend history, is a revelation of his inalienable freedom, for knowledge of necessity implies not only participation in it but also transcendence over it.

This tremendous emphasis on freedom leads us to ask whether even history is man's true home. If everything in history and if history as a total process is subject to thought, must we not say that although the time process may be man's field of operation he no longer is engaged in historical existence when he comprehends history completely? Significantly enough, in the final definition of human freedom which Hegel formulates in the Phenomenology transcendence is no longer dialectically equal to partici-

⁹⁰ Cf. The Phenomenology of Mind, op. cit., p. 798, p. 567n.

pation but is superior to it. Hegel calls the highest function of freedom "recollection," the state "in which Spirit leaves its external embodiment behind" and gives itself over to thought. Recollection is the ability to concentrate on, enter into, appreciate and appropriate, and thereby to conserve in sublimated form, all previous states of existence throughout the entire span of history. This exercise of transcendence is a conscious process of immersion in temporality and annulment of temporality, whose perfect consummation is the philosophical system erected by the cultured philosopher, and whose preparation is some such survey of history as is so brilliantly illustrated by the Phenomenology. Recollection is contemplative participation in the past rather than active participation in present existence.

True knowledge lies in the seeming inactivity which merely watches how what is distinguished is self-moved by its very nature and returns again to its own unity.⁹¹

Or, as Hegel phrases it in a passage which already appears in the Preface:

The knowing activity is the artful device which, while seeming to refrain from activity, looks on and watches how specific determinateness with its concrete life (the time process and man as a time-bound individual), just where it believes it is working out its own self-preservation and its own private interest, is, in point of fact, doing the very opposite, is doing what brings about its own dissolution and makes itself a moment in the whole.⁹²

As philosopher man stands outside time and history. It is not his true home. Then what is man's true nature? The infinite possibilities of human self-transcendence have no limit short of the Absolute. Man must be defined in terms of the Absolute.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 804.

⁹²Ibid., p. 114.

The philosopher (true man) is the eye of the Absolute. He sees all, knows all. He is not Absolute Spirit, for he did not initiate the world process, yet he alone knows its meaning. He is not Absolute Spirit, for he is Absolute Spirit's agent bringing it to self-consciousness; yet his own knowledge is this self-consciousness. The curious way in which Hegel shuttles back and forth between man and Absolute Spirit, between the temporal movement of historical existence and the dialectical movement of philosophical knowledge, equating them while not equating them, makes an univocal answer to the questions of man's nature and home impossible; and it makes a satisfactory view of Absolute Spirit equally impossible.⁹³

⁹³In a somewhat sketchy but nevertheless valuable essay entitled "The Dialectic of the Divine and the Human in German Thought," Berdyaev concludes: "In German metaphysics of the beginning of the nineteenth century everything is on a razor edge and maybe toppled on to one or other of opposite sides. The philosophy of Hegel, which was its crowning manifestation, may be interpreted either as the final engulfing of the divine by the human and as an expression of the pride of man, or as the final engulfing of the human by the divine and as the denial of human personality." (The Divine and the Human, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1949, p. 30). For a succinct account of the ambiguities which Hegel's method leaves unclarified, see J. Loewenberg's introduction to Hegel Selections (New York: Scribners, 1929), xxxviii-xliii.

CONCLUSION

But one thing is clear. The man whom Hegel virtually apotheosizes is not "the whole man" with whom he begins his inquiries into estrangement, the man for whom estrangement is guilt and fate. Nor is it the man for whom estrangement is a discipline necessary to self-development. The difference becomes plain if we ask whether philosophical speculation is an adequate description of human freedom. In the Early Theological Writings Hegel is quite sure that thought and conscious ideas do not exhaust the depth of a man. He describes a dimension of freedom in which the total person exercises self-determination. The fundamental question here is: "To love or not to love?" Throughout his life man's decisions regarding this question influence every area of life. If he refuses to love, he not only estranges himself from his true nature but he also infects the economic, social, political, cultural, and religious forms of his life with estrangement. For a moment in an early chapter of the Phenomenology Hegel describes the basic anxiety which lies at the heart of man's experience of his self-hood: "To be or not to be?" Here again freedom involves the whole man; it is encountered not only as a burden and threat but also as an opportunity for self-realization, and the core of human existence is seen to lie in the courage of a decision made in the face of an unknown future. But in the last chapters of the Phenomenology Hegel indicates that for him freedom has come to mean the freedom of philosophizing. The seriousness and the tragedy of freedom have been undercut. Actual, consciously willing man is non-essential. Responsible decision in

the present about the future is irrelevant, for speculative knowledge of the Absolute achieved through an exhaustive recollection of past history gives assurance that nothing can happen which is not already known. All unrest about meaning, all terror at decision, all abysmal problematic has been eliminated. In short, man is no longer man. The imperialism of philosophical thinking has robbed him of his concrete existence and has reduced him to a principle of intelligibility, to pure mind. Thus the reason why Hegel does not offer a satisfactory answer to the questions of man's true nature and man's true home is that by reducing man to mind he has rubbed out these questions. Ultimately he allows the Absolute to be not only the star actor in the drama of the time process but the only actor, the sole reality.

If man is no longer man, is Hegel's Absolute Knowledge really knowledge? He claims to know without the shadow of a doubt that the essential movement of Absolute Spirit initiates and governs the temporal movement of history. He claims to know, therefore, that reconciliation is the first and the last word, that estrangement inevitably leads to reconciliation. Yet in order to think movement dialectically Hegel must presuppose not man reduced to mind but man existing in time and space. Unless man experiences existence in terms of time and space and unless he intuits time and space conceptually, there is neither knowledge nor progress in knowledge, and experience "takes time." Thus the mind which thinks about eternal dialectical movement is dependent on the "whole man" who knows that "time marches on." Therefore man cannot know that the dialectical movement he attributes to Absolute Spirit is actual motion, nor can he know that this dialectical

movement initiates and governs the time process. Strictly from the standpoint of knowledge, we should suspect that in claiming that he does know these things Hegel is guilty of projecting dynamic human existence into the Absolute. From our survey of his thought, however, we have learned that his conclusion cannot be called mere imaginative projection. It stems from religious faith. It is faith presented as though it were knowledge. To be exact, it is a speculative reinterpretation of Christian eschatological messianism in which Absolute Spirit (Reason) is defined of motifs taken from the Christian belief in a living God who creates, judges, and redeems in and through history. Hegel's conceptual reconciliation in the realm of pure thought is just as symbolic and just as mythological as is the Christian faith, but it is far less existential.

Ironically enough, we approach the end of our study not only with the conclusion that Hegel's offer of Absolute Knowledge is another example of a premature reconciliation, but also with the realization that in his own treatment of the concept of estrangement he has provided another example of estrangement. He has subjected the concept to a radical dislocation. In the Early Theological Writings estrangement raises the question of reconciliation. It describes man's situation and his need, but it does not imply the reality of reconciliation nor does it guarantee its advent. What happens later is that the answer produces the question; the answer is there all the time, and the question simply leads back to its source. Ultimately self-estrangement is a strategy, an "artful device," as Hegel calls it. The philosopher

uses self-estrangement (recollection) as a cognitive tool.¹ Hegel finally argues that at the present advanced stage of human development man's situation is that he merely thinks he is estranged because he does not think correctly; reconciliation is a matter of method and terminology. (Advance from religion to philosophy). Estrangement as a description of the human situation and self-estrangement as a description of man's immediate and personal experience of existence are one thing. Estrangement as incompleteness of thought and self-estrangement as a way of thinking are another. The two definitions of estrangement remain unreconciled. We can

¹In a speech "On Classical Studies," delivered by Hegel as rector of the Gymnasium at Nuremberg in 1809, this point is expressed very vividly. "The progress of culture must not be regarded as the quiet continuation of a chain in which the new links, though attached to older ones without incongruity, are made of fresh material, and the work of forging them is not directed by what has been done before. On the contrary, culture must have earlier material on which it worked and which it changes and modifies. . . . But the substance of Nature and Spirit must have confronted us, must have taken the shape of something alien to us, before it can become our object. Unhappy is he whose immediate world of feelings has been alienated from him--for this means nothing less than the snapping of those bonds of faith, love, and trust which unite heart and head with life in a holy friendship. The alienation which is the condition of theoretical erudition does not require this moral pain, or the sufferings of the heart, but only the easier pain and strain of the imagination which is occupied with something not given in immediate experience, something foreign, something pertaining to recollection, to memory and the thinking mind. . . . The depth and strength to which we attain can be measured only by the distance between the point to which we were fleeing and the center in which we were engrossed at first and to which we shall finally return again. . . . This centrifugal force of the soul explains why the soul must always be provided with the means of estranging itself from its natural condition and essence, and why in particular the young mind must be led into a remote and foreign world. Now, the screen best suited to perform this task of estrangement for the sake of education is the world and language of the ancients. This world separates us from ourselves, but at the same time it grants us the cardinal means of returning to ourselves; we reconcile ourselves with it and thereby find ourselves again in it, but the self which we then find is the one which accords with the tone and universal essence of mind." (included in ETW, pp. 321-322).

agree with Hegel that man's indeterminate possibilities of self-transcendence imply that in some sense he is not completely bound by time. But when he triumphantly proclaims the victory of speculation over time and ushers in the reconciled harmony of the final age of the Spirit, we can only say that although man transcends time in a mysterious way, in an equally mysterious way he nevertheless participates in it as a time-bound, anxious, self-estranged being who (as Hegel himself inadvertently has demonstrated) must ultimately walk by faith and not by sight. As Paul Tillich has said,

For man reconciliation is always a paradox, a matter of soaring between uncertainty and certainty, of venturing faith and unexpected grace.²

The eschaton has not yet arrived.

In the meantime, however, we can learn a great deal from Hegel's descriptions of historical existence, for only the "happy ending" saves his picture of the human situation from being overshadowed by tragedy. If the certainty of reconciliation is removed, there is reason to suggest, with Loewenberg, that Hegel's philosophy is a Domonodicy, a justification of the ways of the devil and a description of human existence as hell.³ If the certainty of reconciliation is removed, self-estrangement may be experienced as a powerful invitation to despair. The greatness of Hegel's concept of estrangement is that it is a root metaphor which sums up the folly, contradiction, incongruity, frustration, anxiety, and self-destructiveness which pervade man's concrete existence, his existence

²"Estrangement and Reconciliation in Modern Thought," presidential address for the American Theological Society, 1944; mimeographed, p. 3.

³Loewenberg, op. cit., p. xl.

as a "whole man." When understood in the context of a faith in Heilsgeschichte, it is worthy of being a central descriptive category in any realistic and honest interpretation of the human situation. It is not accidental, therefore, that the various philosophers who since Hegel's time have agreed that man's experience of existence is the proper material for philosophical reflection, have employed the concept of estrangement. In doing so they have paid tribute to the profundity, the accuracy, and the abiding significance of Hegel's vision.⁴

In conclusion we must add that the concept of estrangement is valuable also within the context of a faith in Heilsgeschichte, in the work of Christian theology, which is no less concerned with a realistic and honest appraisal of human existence than is philosophy. The idea is directly relevant to the doctrine of sin. One classical definition of sin is that it is separation from God. As we have seen, Hegel defines estrangement in terms of separation and externalization. To what extent can the two concepts be assimilated to one another? Let us look briefly at the two main lines of emphasis in the doctrine of sin and relate the concept of estrangement to them. The first emphasis pictures the separation of man from God as a perennial situation, as a characteristic of historical existence. Insofar as the concept of estrangement describes existence, the materials provided by Hegel offer the theologian abundant resources for understanding and explaining and

⁴Jean Wahl ends his study of Le Malheur de la Conscience, (op.cit.), by saying that even in the later system, when Hegel tried to make a synthesis of the living notion and the dead form, the primitive elements of his thought (the theological elements) remained active even though they threatened to break the sheathing of the system. And he voices the conviction of the present writer when he says in his last sentence: "Perhaps they are more precious than the system." (p. 250)

illustrating the meaning of sin as a structural reality. The second emphasis pictures sin as man's disobedience toward God. Here attention is focused not on existence as a situation but on man's freedom, on his participation in the situation by his own decision. Insofar as the concept of self-estrangement involves decision and responsibility it is applicable to the idea of sin as voluntary choice. But it calls into question both the symbol of disobedience and the implied symbol of God as a being "opposite" man or "above" man against whom man rebels. For if we say that sin is separation from God and estrangement from self simultaneously, self and God are so closely identified that the picture of them as two separate beings external to one another is inappropriate. The disruption of their unity cannot be described as disobedience or rebellion. In fact, if carried far enough, sin as self-estrangement suggests that between God and man there is a dialectical correlation in which not only is man estranged from himself when he is estranged from God, but also God is in some sense estranged from Himself when He is estranged from man. The idea of self-estrangement takes us beyond moralistic versions of the doctrine of sin and beyond commonly accepted theistic versions of the doctrine of God. It would seem, however, that if such words as obedience and disobedience are excluded from meaningful discourse regarding sin, a fundamental level of personal experience is being slighted. We might ask, therefore, whether the drive toward a mystical "identity in non-identify" between God and man which inheres in the idea of self-estrangement is so strong that it fails to do justice to the ethical dimension of man's life and of the doctrine of sin. We cannot go further in this interesting and promising theological

investigation. Let us close our study by saying that the concept of estrangement is a valuable and fruitful category which should be drawn into our theological thinking and discussion.

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